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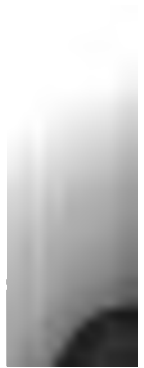
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THE RIGHT HON. EARL CAIRNS.

WILLIAM MACKENZIE, LONDON, EDINBURGH & GLASGOW





THE  
RIGHT HON. BENJAMIN DISRAELI,  
EARL OF BEACONSFIELD, K.G.,  
AND HIS TIMES.

BY  
ALEXANDER CHARLES EWALD, F.S.A.,  
AUTHOR OF "SIR ROBERT WALPOLE, A POLITICAL BIOGRAPHY;" "THE LIFE AND TIMES OF PRINCE  
CHARLES STUART;" "REPRESENTATIVE STATESMEN," ETC., ETC.

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1881.







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*Engraved by E. Stodart from a Photograph by W. & D. Downey.*

RIGHT HON. GATHORNE HARDY,  
VISCOUNT CRANBROOK.



















*Engraved by G. J. Stodart from a Photo, by Alex. Bassano*

RIGHT HON. SIR MICHAEL HICKS BEACH, BART.

WILLIAM MACKENZIE, LONDON, EDINBURGH & GLAZGOW.











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RIGHT HON. JOHN ARTHUR ROEBUCK, M.P., Q.C.



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RIGHT HON. SPENCER H. WALPOLE, M.P., Q.C.

WILLIAM MACKENZIE, LONDON, EDINBURGH & GLASGOW





bringing into operation the half repeal of the malt tax."

Mr. Disraeli then refuted the misstatements of Mr. Lowe very much after the same fashion as Mr. Bass had refuted them. He also replied to the instance of the mortgage which Mr. Lowe had adduced as a parallel illustration of the fallacy of the proposition respecting the £400,000 repayments. "I beg to offer him," said the chancellor of the exchequer, "a parallel more apposite than his own. I will suppose the case of a careful father of a family who every three months takes account of his expenditure and income, and devotes one-fourth of his surplus to the payment of his debts, a portion of those debts being incurred by advances to his son; but the son, when he makes the repayments for these advances, makes them into the hands of a banker, by whom no interest is given; so the father, instead of allowing the money to remain idly there, takes it into his general account, and, when he strikes his quarterly balances, applies the repayments as part of his surplus to the reduction of his debts. That is my answer to the case of the hon. gentleman, and I humbly deem my instance an exacter parallel than his own."

Mr. Disraeli next proceeded to deal with the charge made by Sir Charles Wood, that if the budget were passed the direct taxation of the country would be recklessly increased. There was no truth in such an accusation. Instead of direct taxation being increased, there would be actually less than when the finances were under the superintendence of Sir Charles Wood, though the member for Halifax then enjoyed not only the income and property tax, but also the window tax. And to be charged with recklessness from such a quarter! "The right hon. gentleman," cried Mr. Disraeli amid the laughter of the House, "who says you must not recklessly increase the amount of direct taxation and charges me with doing so, when in 1850 he commuted the window tax for a house tax, first proposed, though

fruitlessly, a commutation which would have established a higher house tax than that which we now recommend, coupled by us with great remissions of indirect imposts. But is this all? Is this all that has been done by the right hon. gentleman, who charges me with proposing recklessly to increase the direct taxation of the country? Why, he seems to forget that he is the minister who, with the property and income tax you have now producing its full amount, with a window tax that brought nearly £2,000,000, came down to the House of Commons one day and proposed to a startled assembly to double nearly that property and income tax. Recklessness! Why, sir, if recklessness be carelessness of consequences, if it be the conduct of a man who has not well weighed the enterprise in which he is embarked, what are we to esteem this behaviour of the right hon. gentleman? We hear much of the duplication of the house tax—an innocent amount; but if the right hon. gentleman had carried the duplication of the property and income tax, I think he might fairly have been charged with recklessly increasing the direct taxation of the country. The most curious thing, however, is that the minister who came forward to make a proposition which nothing but the most grave conjuncture of circumstances could have justified, at the first menace of opposition withdrew his proposition. Talk of recklessness! Why, what in the history of finance is equal to the recklessness of the right hon. gentleman? And what was the ground on which he withdrew this enormous proposition—a proposition which only the safety of the state would have justified him in making? When he was beaten, baffled, humiliated, he came down to the House of Commons and said that he had sufficient revenue without resorting to that proposition! The future historian will not be believed when he states that a minister came down with a proposition nearly to double the income tax, and when that measure was rejected, the next day announced that the ways and



means were ample without it. But then the right hon. gentleman tells me in not very polished, and scarcely in parliamentary language, that I do not know my business. The House of Commons is the best judge of that; I care not to be his critic. Yet, if he has learnt his business, he has still to learn some other things; he has to learn that petulance is not sarcasm, and that insolence is not invective."

Mr. Disraeli then explained how the government, in providing an amount of direct taxation for their purpose, had been guided by two principles—first, as regarded the income tax, to establish a distinction between realized and precarious incomes; and secondly, to enlarge the basis of direct taxation. In spite of the observations of Sir James Graham, "whom I will not say I greatly respect," added Mr. Disraeli parenthetically, "but rather whom I greatly regard," who had dilated in very touching terms upon the hardship of taxing poor clerks, the chancellor of the exchequer still was of opinion that his measure was just. It had been laid down, argued Mr. Disraeli, by the best authorities that there was no class upon whom the incidence of taxation fell more lightly than upon those who possessed incomes from £100 to £150 a year; it was that class who owned property of £300 or £400 a year who bore the brunt of indirect taxation. With regard to the house tax, he believed it was a reasonable, just, and beneficial measure, and that it would supply the necessary amount of direct taxation. He had, therefore, to decide upon what group of indirect taxes he should operate, and he came to the conclusion that he should act upon those articles which entered into the consumption of the people, and which were subject to the largest impost.

He defended his selection of the malt duty against the various attacks which had been made upon it. He denied that the consumer would not benefit from the reduction of the tax, and that all the profit from the transaction would go to

the brewer. "Sir," said Mr. Disraeli, with his usual happy gift of turning the tables upon the enemy, "I remember when we used to discuss the effect of taxation on another article that similar observations were made. I do not care now to remember from what quarter they emanated, but the effect and object of those observations were exactly the same. Then it was, 'Oh! those villains, the bakers!' just as now it is to be 'those villains, the brewers!' You might reduce the price of corn—you might injure the agricultural interest—you might ruin the farmers and the country gentlemen; but you could not reduce the price of the loaf to the consumer. No; the bakers took it all. Yes; and there were the millers too. The millers were the worst of all; they carried off all the reduction. Well, those arguments had a considerable effect, and there was such a prejudice raised against the bakers throughout the country, that I should not have been surprised if they had been all hanged in one day, as the bakers had once been in Constantinople. At that time it used to be shown that a fall of 10s. a quarter on wheat would not affect the price of bread; and we were told that the bakers then, like the brewers now, were a great monopoly, if not great capitalists; they were a kind of freemasons; and do what you would, it would be totally impossible in any way even to get a cheap loaf. And now—such are the vicissitudes of political life—we have the same arguments from those gentlemen who used to dilate so eloquently on the necessity of buying in the cheapest and selling in the dearest market. The great friends of the consumer—the enemies of colossal monopolies—here we find them all arrayed in favour of high taxation for the producer; and here we find them, with taunts to us, teaching all the fallacies which we at least have had the courage honourably to give up. Tell him Protection was dead! Tell him there was no Protectionist party in the country! Why, it is rampant, and it is there!" he exclaimed, pointing to the Op-

position facing him. "They have taken up our principles with our benches, and I believe they will be quite as unsuccessful."

Mr. Disraeli then concluded by stating that in his opinion the revenue of the country would be very considerable at the end of the year 1854-55. He believed that a great saving would be effected in the public expenditure by the administrative reforms and retrenchments that were to be introduced. He thus ended:—

"Some advice has been offered to me which I ought perhaps to notice. I have been told to withdraw my budget. I was told that Mr. Pitt withdrew his budget, and I know that more recently other persons have done so too. I do not aspire to the fame of Mr. Pitt, but I will not submit to the degradation of others. No. I have seen the consequences of a government not being able to pass their measures—consequences not honourable to the government, not advantageous to the country, and not, in my opinion, conducive to the reputation of the House, which is most dear to me. I remember a budget which was withdrawn, and re-withdrawn, and withdrawn again, in the year 1848. What was the consequence of that government, thus existing upon sufferance? What was the consequence to the finances of the country? Why, that injurious, unjust, and ignoble transaction respecting the commutation of the window tax and house duty, which now I am obliged to attempt to remedy. The grievance is deeper than mere questions of party consideration. When parties are balanced—when a government cannot pass its measures—the highest principles of public life, the most important of the dogmas of politics, degenerate into party questions. Look at this question of direct taxation, the most important question of the day. It is a question which must sooner or later force itself upon everybody's attention; and I see many who I know sympathize, so far as that important principle is concerned, with the policy of the government. Well, direct taxation, although applied with wisdom,

temperance, and prudence, has become a party question. Talk of administrative reform! Talk of issuing commissions to inquire into our dockyards! Why, if I were, which is not impossible by intense labour, to bring forward a scheme which might save £1,000,000 annually to the country, administrative reform would become a party question to-morrow. Yes! I know what I have to face. I have to face a coalition. The combination may be successful. A coalition has before this been successful. But coalitions, although successful, have always found this, that their triumph has been brief. This, too, I know that England does not love coalitions.\* I appeal from the coalition to that public opinion which governs this country—to that public opinion whose mild and irresistible influence can control even the decrees of parliaments, and without whose support the most august and ancient institutions are but 'the baseless fabric of a vision.'"

No sooner had the chancellor of the exchequer taken his seat than Mr. Gladstone, raging with pent-up fury, bounced up and addressed the House. He was reluctant, he panted forth, to trespass upon the attention of the committee, but it appeared to him that the speech they had just listened to was a speech that ought to meet with a reply, and that, too, on the moment. "Sir," he cried, addressing Mr. Patten, "I begin by telling the right hon. gentleman, the chancellor of the exchequer, before I come to the question whether he knows his business or not, that

\* England certainly does not "love coalitions." The existence of the few coalition cabinets we have had, has been very brief. The coalition ministry under the nominal presidency of the Duke of Portland, which included Lord North and Mr. Fox, came into power, April 2, 1783, and was dismissed, December 18, 1783. Lord Grenville's administration ("All the Talents") came into power, January 26, 1806, and was dismissed, March 24, 1807. George Canning succeeded in forming a coalition cabinet, April 10, 1827, which was, however, dissolved by his death, August 8, 1827; had he lived it is improbable that his administration would have continued for any length of time. Canning was succeeded by Lord Goderich, but the coalition was dissolved, January 8, 1828. The ministry of the Duke of Wellington, which was at first a coalition, but afterwards was Tory, existed little more than two years. Of all the coalition cabinets, the Aberdeen administration, which held office from December 27, 1852, to February 1, 1855, was the longest lived.

there are some things which he too has yet to learn. (*Loud cries of hear, hear! from the Opposition*). And I tell him that the licence of language he has used, and the phrases he has applied to the characters of public men—(*interruption*)—to those whose public career—(*continued interruption prevented the sentence from being finished*). My wish is to keep myself—although I confess I could not hear the phrases which the right hon. gentleman has used, and remain totally unmoved—to keep myself within the bounds of parliamentary order and propriety. And I beg of you, sir, that if in one single remark which I shall make, I trespass beyond those limits, you will have the kindness to correct me. (*Cheers and interruption*). I do not address myself to those gentlemen belonging to the great party opposite, from whom I never received anything but kindness and courtesy; but notwithstanding the efforts of some gentlemen, in remote corners of the House, who are availing themselves of the darkness, I tell them they must bear to hear their chancellor of the exchequer, who is so free in his comments upon others, brought to the bar of this committee, and tried by those laws of decency and propriety which he—(*the rest of the sentence was lost in the cheers of the Opposition*). We are accustomed here to attach to the words of the minister of the crown a great authority; and that disposition to attach authority, as it is required by the public interest, so it has been usually justified by the character and conduct of ministers. But the right hon. gentleman is not entitled to charge with insolence men who—(*Cheers and much interruption*). I must tell him that he is not entitled to say to my right hon. friend, the member for Carlisle, that he regards, but does not respect him. I must tell the right hon. gentleman, that whatever he has learnt—and he has learnt much—he has not learnt the limits of discretion, of moderation and forbearance, that ought to restrain the conduct and language of every member of this House, the disregard of which would

be an offence in the meanest among us, but which is an offence of tenfold weight when committed by the leader of the House of Commons." (*Loud cheers from the Opposition*).

Passing from these painful personal topics to the main subject before the committee, Mr. Gladstone said that he objected to the resolution now under discussion, whether it was a vote for a house tax, or a vote for the budget. He repeated the specific stock objections to the house tax; he showed how severely the additional direct taxes would affect persons of small incomes, some of whom, including the clergy and the yeomen, would come for the first time within the sweep of the income tax. He objected to the additional house tax, because it was connected with the repeal of half the malt tax—a measure which was professedly for the immediate benefit of the consumer, whereas it was a sacrifice of £2,500,000 for a reduction in the price of beer that would scarcely be appreciable. The imposing a tax of one kind to repeal a tax of another was a most delicate operation, and one which required the most jealous scrutiny. The question, however, which lay at the root of the whole discussion was that of the income tax and its modifications. Nothing could satisfy the country upon that head but a plan, not an abstraction—not something seductive which they who proposed it knew could not be carried into effect. There was, however, no plan, and the House of Commons would forfeit its duty if it consented to deal in the abstract with a matter respecting which the theories were endless. Criticising the budget generally, Mr. Gladstone asserted that the chancellor of the exchequer had introduced a new principle, subversive of all rules of prudence, by presenting a budget without a surplus, for the £400,000 he still insisted, in opposition to Mr. Disraeli, was borrowed money, and no real surplus. That right hon. gentleman, he said, had complained of being opposed by a coalition. He (Mr. Gladstone) wanted to know whether a minister of the crown was entitled to



make such a charge against independent members of parliament, and without any evidence. He voted against the budget not only because he disapproved on general grounds of its principles, but emphatically because it was his firm conviction that it was the most perverted budget in its tendency and ultimate effects he had ever seen; and if the House should sanction its delusive scheme, the day would come when it would look back with bitter and late, though ineffectual repentance.

The division then took place, with the following result:—

Ayes, . . . . .	286
Noes, . . . . .	305

Majority against the government, . . . 19

The division was fatal to the cabinet. Lord Derby proceeded the next morning to Osborne to tender his own resignation and that of his colleagues to Her Majesty. Lord Malmesbury, the evening after the division, made this announcement in the House of Lords:—"My Lords, in consequence of what took place in the House of Commons last night, with respect to the resolutions moved by the chancellor of the exchequer, and in consequence of the unavoidable absence of the prime minister, who has gone to see Her Majesty at Osborne, I shall move that this House do now adjourn until Monday next." Upon that day (December 20) Lord Derby announced to his brother peers in the House of Lords the dissolution of the government, and that the queen had been pleased to intrust the formation of a new cabinet to the Earl of Aberdeen.

A similar statement was made by Mr. Disraeli in the House of Commons. "After the vote at which the House arrived on Thursday night," he said, "the Earl of Derby and his colleagues thought it their duty to tender the resignation of their offices to Her Majesty, and Her Majesty has been most graciously pleased to accept the same. It has reached me that Lord Aberdeen has undertaken the office of

forming a new administration, and therefore it only remains for me to say that we hold our present offices only until our successors are appointed. I hope the House will not think it presumptuous on my part if, under these circumstances, I venture to offer them my grateful thanks for the indulgent, and I may even say the generous manner, in which on both sides I have been supported in attempting to conduct the business of this House. If in maintaining a too unequal struggle any word has escaped my lips (which I hope has never been the case except in the way of retort), which has hurt the feelings of any gentleman in this House, I deeply regret it; and I hope that the impression on their part will be as transient as the sense of provocation was on my own. The kind opinion of the members of this House, whatever may be their political opinions and wherever I may sit, will always be to me a most precious possession—one which I shall always covet and most highly appreciate."

A soft answer, we know, turneth away wrath, and the example set by Mr. Disraeli caused a tone of chivalrous good feeling to run through the chamber. "I feel quite certain," said Lord John Russell, "that if at any time in the course of our debates those flying words which will occur at such times have carried a barb with them, it is to be attributed entirely to the circumstances in which the House has been placed. For my part I can only admire the ability and gallantry with which the right hon. gentleman has conducted himself on the part of the government and in behalf of the cause which he has undertaken, in the struggle in which he has been for some time engaged. It is perhaps impossible to hope that those halcyon days will ever arrive in which, in the course of debate, an unpremeditated remark will not occasionally occur which will give rise to some unpleasant feeling; but if ever it should occur in future, feelings of that kind must be done away if the person in the situation

of the right hon. gentleman imitates his example, and disclaims the intention with the same frankness which he has displayed on the present occasion."

Sir Jas. Graham—"whom I will not say I greatly respect, but rather whom I greatly regard"—in his turn could not refrain from saying a word upon the subject. "It would be impossible for me not to avow," he began, "that I was somewhat pained by an expression which fell from the right hon. gentleman on Thursday night. If I had thought that the right hon. gentleman by premeditation intended to wound me, my feelings would be far different, and it would be my duty to express them in a different manner. But I am not conscious that I have ever, in the course of the debate, said anything with the intentional purpose to wound the feelings of the right hon. gentleman, and I could not believe that, without provocation, he gave expression to words intended to wound me. I was confident, therefore, that the expression that had pained me was without premeditation, and what the right hon. gentleman has just said to-night has confirmed that impression. There is no member of this House so deeply attached to freedom of debate as I am. In the course of debates here, I have certainly myself used unguarded expressions to others, and should consequently be the last person to feel resentment after receiving an explanation. At the same time, I cordially join in what has fallen from my noble friend the member for the city of London. I have never failed to admire the talents of the right hon. gentleman the chancellor of the exchequer, and I also must say, under great difficulties he has conducted the cause of the government in the last ten months in this House with signal ability. I shall not for one moment recollect the expression to which I have thought it my duty to refer, and I hope my conduct in this House will, at all times, insure some portion of its respect."

Nor was Sir Charles Wood, who had been taught that "petulance was not sarcasm, nor

abuse invective," a whit less generous in his acceptance of the apology. He had not been conscious, he said, of having used any expressions beyond the fair limits of debate; indeed, in the opinion of those around him, the attack made upon him had been quite uncalled for. "I think it fair to say this in my own defence," he continued, "though at the same time I am ready to admit, that feeling strongly as I did on the question, I may in the heat of debate have been betrayed into a warmth of expression which it was far beyond my intention to use. Having said thus much in my own defence, I beg to add that I accept the expressions which have just fallen from the right hon. gentleman, the chancellor of the exchequer, in the same frank spirit in which he has uttered them. He must, I am sure, feel with me, that after the terms of reciprocal kindness in which we have always communicated with each other heretofore, it would ill become either of us to indulge in personalities. I will only say further respecting any expression of mine that may have given pain to the right hon. gentleman, that there is no expression of courtesy towards him that I am not ready and willing to make. I am most anxious that our debate be conducted with the utmost courtesy and good feeling, and I am sorry that anything should have arisen to give a different character to our proceedings." It was not without reason that Lord Palmerston had said that the House of Commons was an assembly of gentlemen.

Thus fell the Derby, or as it has been called on account of the dominant influence exercised over it by the chancellor of the exchequer, the Derby-Disraeli government. Its overthrow was due to no faults of maladministration, but to the factious combination of three parties in the House of Commons, who were determined from the very first not to allow a cabinet which had once opposed the principles of free trade to continue in office. During the few months the Derby ministry held power it had introduced various wise measures of reform;

its foreign policy had been energetic without being aggressive; whilst its financial schemes, in spite of the organized hostility they then encountered, have offered not a few valuable hints—witness, for example, the reduction of the tea duties—to succeeding chancellors of the exchequer.

“My lords,” said the Earl of Derby in the Upper House on his resignation of office, “for my own part I need hardly say that, personally to myself, the surrender of office is no sacrifice and costs no pain in personal feelings. It would indeed be a deep mortification to me if, in resigning the trust reposed in my hands by my sovereign, I left the country in a less advantageous position than I found it; but I rejoice to think that, short as has been the period during which I and my colleagues have held office, that period has not been without some advantage to the country; that period has not elapsed without some beneficial measures having been carried; and that we shall leave the country in a condition of as great peace and tranquillity as we found it. My lords, I have no hesitation in saying, that in regard to the foreign relations of the country, we leave it in a more advantageous state—that our foreign relations are in a more friendly and in a more satisfactory position—than when my noble friend, the foreign secretary (Lord Malmesbury), received charge of that department. . . . If we look to the department of law we shall find that greater improvements and reforms have taken place in that department during the last twelve months, than

have taken place for many years previous—reforms of a magnitude and importance which have gained the acknowledgments both of the members of this House and of the country at large. . . . I take no credit to the present government for the state of our finances; but I think I may take credit for our having done this—for having for the first time broken the apathy, the dangerous apathy, which for so many years has existed to the injury of the public service, in regard to the internal defences of this country. And if we leave the affairs of this country in such a state that there is no fear of hostility from abroad—in a state of friendly relations with all the great powers—we leave it also in a condition of self-defence, which is partially effected, and towards the full completion of which we have laid a ground which, I trust, will not be abandoned by those who may succeed us—who, I trust, will not be neglectful of those great elements of self-defence which we have called into operation—the old or constitutional force of the militia, and the increase of that naval force on which primarily, and in the first instance, the safety and honour of the country depend. My lords, we leave the administration with the country in a state, I hope, of tranquillity, of contentment, and of prosperity; at peace with all foreign powers—with increased, if not with fully accomplished means of self-defence and self-dependence. Under these circumstances it is no personal sacrifice to us to surrender the reins of office.”

## CHAPTER XI.

### CLOUDS IN THE EAST.

LORD ABERDEEN, an amiable and accomplished man, but who lacked the decision of character and the absence of prejudice requisite to lead a cabinet, had seen no little service in the state before having been called upon to form an administration. Twice he had held the seals as secretary of state for foreign affairs, and it was well known that the late Sir Robert Peel had entertained a high opinion of his talents. A scholar, a careful speaker, a man who thought much, almost too much, before he acted, an able composer of state papers, and of sound judgment when he was not too fearful of responsibility, he was one of those men who are excellent administrators under the guidance of some commanding spirit, but who, from the habit of relying upon others, become feeble and incompetent, owing to a too great sensitiveness to public opinion, when compelled to lead and organize. Overawed by the responsibilities of their situation, they regard every question from so many points of view, that they prefer rather to remain stationary than to adopt any decided course of action. The ministry formed by Lord Aberdeen was a singularly strong one. With the exception of Mr. Disraeli, it enrolled within its ranks every member of marked ability in the House of Commons. Lord Cranworth held the great seal; Mr. Gladstone superintended the finances as chancellor of the exchequer; Lord John Russell controlled diplomacy from the foreign office; Lord Palmerston, who wished to extend his knowledge of administration, presided over the internal affairs of the country as home secretary; to the Duke of Newcastle was intrusted the supervision of our colonies; Sir James

Graham was once more ruling naval matters at the Admiralty; Mr. Sidney Herbert was secretary at war; Sir Charles Wood, as president of the board of control, was not allowed the opportunity of introducing any further blundering budgets; Lord Granville sat as president of the council; the Duke of Argyle held the privy seal; the Marquis of Lansdowne had a seat in the cabinet without office. It was not, therefore, without some reason, that the Aberdeen administration was christened "All the Talents."

The ministerial programme was soon announced. On the meeting of the Houses after the adjournment, Lord Aberdeen laid before his brother peers the course the new government intended to pursue. With regard to foreign powers, they would adhere to the principle which had been pursued for the last thirty years, and which consisted in respecting the rights of all independent states, in abstaining from interference in their internal affairs, and, above all, in an earnest desire to secure the general peace of Europe. Such a policy could be observed without any relaxation of those defensive measures which had been lately undertaken, and which had, perhaps, been too long neglected. At home the mission of the government would be to maintain and extend free-trade principles, and to pursue the commercial and financial system of the late Sir Robert Peel. A crisis in their financial arrangements would speedily occur by the cessation of a large branch of the revenue, and it would tax the ingenuity of all concerned to re-adjust their finances according to the principles of justice and equity. The questions of education and legal reform would also receive every

attention at the hands of the government; nor would an amendment of the representative system, undertaken without haste or rashness, be excluded from their mature consideration. The government would be conservative in preserving all that was sound and beneficial, and liberal in redressing all grievances that were justly complained of.

A few days after the re-assembling of parliament, Mr. Disraeli, as leader of the Opposition, made his first attack upon the Treasury bench. Events had been rapidly marching in France during the last few months. It was the old story told so often in political revolutions—first a people dissatisfied with their monarchy; then the liberty, equality, and fraternity of a militant and divided republicanism; then the ambition of one individual; then plots, combinations, and manœuvres, until the whip of rods is exchanged for the whip of scorpions, and the republic develops into a military despotism. The *coup d'état* had been successful, and Louis Napoleon had been installed at Nôtre Dame as President of France for the next ten years. Though advised by a state council, a senate of nobles, and a legislative assembly, the whole executive power was really in the hands of the new president. Ambition grows by what it feeds upon, and Louis Napoleon resolved, shortly after his accession to office, to obtain higher honours. He announced to the senate his intention of restoring the Empire, and gave orders that the people should be consulted on the change. France was canvassed, and voted by an immense majority in favour of the restoration of the Empire. The president of the French was accordingly declared emperor of France by the title of Napoleon III., and his title was acknowledged shortly afterwards by England and the rest of the European powers. This elevation to the imperial purple took place a few weeks before the fall of Lord Derby's government, and tended not a little to increase the fears as to the possibility of a French invasion of England.

Shortly before the meeting of the Houses, Sir Charles Wood had been entertained at dinner at Halifax by his constituents. In the course of the speech he delivered upon that occasion (February 7, 1853), after a few remarks glorifying the Liberal policy in the past, and the splendid results that had followed from it, he discussed the question of the extension of the franchise, to which he said he was averse until the people became better educated and more intelligent. "And surely, gentlemen," he cried, "we have warning enough in what has taken place in foreign countries against precipitate and ill-considered measures of this description? There is hardly a country in Europe which, in the last four or five years, has not attempted a revolution. There is hardly a country in Europe in which, I may say, the mob has not for a time gained the ascendancy; and there is not a country in Europe in which the reaction has not been such that, at the present moment, despotism rules from one extremity of Europe to the other, and the only power acknowledged is that of the sword. Take our nearest neighbours. Such a despotism never prevailed in France even in the time of Napoleon I. The press gagged; liberty suppressed; no man allowed to speak his opinion; the neighbouring country of Belgium forced to gag her press; no press in Europe free but ours, which, thank God, he cannot gag! And hence his hatred of our press, that it alone dare to speak the truth. But how has that despotism been constituted? Not by the intelligence of France, not by the intelligent electors; not by the educated classes of France, because he altered the constitution before he put the question of his power to the vote. Twice an appeal has been made in the form in which he chose to put it to the people of France. The votes in France were taken by universal suffrage and vote by ballot." Sir Charles concluded by expressing his fear of French aggression, and that, with so unscrupulous a man on the throne as the Emperor Na-



journal, it believed England to be more wary and vigilant, so as not to be taken by surprise. Sir James Graham had also shown the same mind, suggesting the emperor as a despot who treated his people and slaves.

Leaders in grace and magnitude upon a sovereign will whom we were in terms of friendship and cordiality were naturally not permitted to pass without encountering severe criticism. Sir Charles Wood had recently taken the seat as the re-elected of Halifax when Mr. Disraeli, whose sympathies with France were always strong and genuine, rose up in the House of Commons to make some inquiries as to the government's will respect to our relations with France. His speech on this occasion was one of the most important he delivered during the year. "Our relationship with France," he said, "was the gravest subject of modern politics. For nearly forty years peace had existed between England and France. During that interval the social relations of the two countries had become various and multiplied, for there were no two countries calling themselves first-class powers between whom all questions of high policy were so elemental. It was therefore extremely strange that, under such circumstances, an idea should seem to have entered into almost every man's brain and an expression into every man's mouth that they were on the eve of a rupture with France." He did not therefore think it unreasonable that, on going into committee of supply, when they were about to vote large sums to sustain the armaments of the country, he should make some inquiries on a subject of such absorbing interest, and offer a few remarks before the House went into committee. On such a topic, he said, it was most important that no false opinion should take possession of the public mind.

"I know," proceeded Mr. Disraeli, "there are persons in both countries—persons born and bred probably during the last great struggle—who are of opinion that there is

a natural hostility between the French and the English nations. They are persons who may probably be placed in the same category with those who think, or used to think, that five per cent. is the natural rate of interest. But, at the same time, they are persons influenced in many instances by very sincere and patriotic feelings; and their opinions, though they may be erroneous prejudices, are not to be despised as a contemptible like the present. I know that if persons influenced by such a conviction it is in vain to appeal by any of those economical considerations which are often mentioned in the present day. I know it is in vain to impress on them that, in an age favourable to industry, ancient and civilized communities are diverted from thoughts of war. I know it is in vain to appeal to the higher impulse of that philanthropy which many of us believe, in such communities, in societies under such conditions of great antiquity and advanced civilization, to be instigating the heart of nations. But I think it right to appeal to facts which cannot be disputed—to the past conduct of men which, according to the theories of these individuals, is the best test of what their future behaviour will be, and I must say I do not see that the history of the past justifies the too prevalent opinion that between England and France there is a natural rivalry and hostility. I know very well that if you go back to ancient history—or rather to the ancient history of the two countries—that you may appeal to Cressy, and Poitiers, and to Agincourt, and believe there has always been a struggle between the two countries, and that struggle has always redounded to the glory of England. But it should be remembered that these were not wars so much between France and England as between the king of France and the king of England as a French prince—that the latter was fighting for his provinces of Picardy or Aquitaine—and that in fact it was not a struggle between the two nations.

"I take it for granted," he continued, that in considering this point our history must not go back to a more distant period than to that happy hour when the keys of Calais were fortunately delivered over for ever to the care of a French monarch; and when we take that view, which is the real point of our modern history, as one that should guide us on this subject, we shall observe that the most sagacious sovereigns and the most eminent statesmen of England, almost without exception, have held that the French alliance, or a cordial understanding with the French nation, should be the cornerstone of our diplomatic system and the keynote of our foreign policy. No one can deny that both Queen Elizabeth and the Lord Protector looked to that alliance as the basis of their foreign connections. No one can deny that there was one subject on which even the brilliant Bolingbroke and the sagacious Walpole agreed—and that was the great importance of cultivating an alliance or good understanding with France. At a later date the most eminent of the statesmen of this century, Mr. Pitt, formed his system on this principle, and entered public life to establish a policy which, both for political considerations and commercial objects, mainly depended on an alliance and good understanding with the French nation. And therefore it is not true that there has been at all times, or at most times, a want of sympathy in England with the French people; but on the contrary, the reverse is the truth, and the alliance and good understanding that has prevailed between us has in my opinion been a source of great advantage to both countries, and has advanced the civilization of Europe. But what has occurred in our time proves, I think, the truth that the natural tendency of the influences that regulate both countries is to peace; because the fact—that, after such extraordinary events as the European revolutions at the end of the last and beginning of this century, the great struggle that occurred, and the great characters that figured in

it—the fact that all should terminate in a peace of so permanent a character as that which has prevailed, proves the tendency of all those causes which influence the conduct of both nations, and which lead to peace from a conviction of its advantage to both countries. I will not, therefore, dwell further upon this point except to express my protest against the dogma which I am sorry to see has been revived of late, not merely in England, although it is too prevalent in this country, that there is a feeling of natural hostility between the nations of Great Britain and France."

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to explain that the increase of the armaments of England was not due to the recent events that had taken place in France, for the vote for such increase had passed long before Louis Napoleon had attained to the position he now occupied. Science, he explained, had caused a great revolution in the art of war; and, therefore, ten years ago Sir Robert Peel had felt it incumbent upon himself, in the agitated state in which Europe then was, to commence a new system with regard to our defences, so that we should be fully prepared for any emergency that might arise, and not be ignorant of the new methods by which offensive and defensive operations were now conducted. It thus became necessary to place England in a state of safety and defence; yet such necessity was not caused by any changes in foreign countries, but by the changes in scientific warfare. He did not think there was any occasion to fear France. It was true that in France there was a military government, and that that country was now regulated by the army. "But," argued Mr. Disraeli, "there is a great error also, I apprehend, if history is to guide us, in assuming that because a country is governed by an army, that army must be extremely anxious to conquer other countries. When armies are anxious for conquest, it is because their position at home is uneasy, because their authority is not recognized, and because their power is not felt. It

is the army returning from conquest that attempts to obtain supreme power in the state; but if an army finds that it does possess supreme power, you very rarely find that restless desire for foreign aggression which is supposed to be the inevitable characteristic of a military force. Now, there is one remarkable characteristic of the present military government in France, that that government has not been occasioned by the ambition of the army, but by the solicitation of classes of civilians, of large bodies of the industrial population, who, frightened whether rightly or wrongly by a state of disturbance and as they supposed of menacing anarchy, turned to the only disciplined body at command which they thought could secure order. I am led, therefore, to the belief that in the circumstance that there is a dynasty founded by a conqueror, but which is not a warlike dynasty; and that France is governed by the army, not in consequence of the military ambition of the troops, but in consequence of the disquietude of the citizens—there is no reason for that great anxiety which is now prevalent.”

He, however, fully admitted that prejudice had been excited in England against the third Napoleon for having terminated a parliamentary constitution, and for having abrogated the liberty of the press. “It is unnecessary for me to say,” said Mr. Disraeli, with that noble self-respect which always prevented him from pretending to be—the great temptation to meaner natures on attaining wealth or power—other than he really was, “that it is not probable I shall ever say or do anything which would tend to depreciate the influence or to diminish the power of parliament or the press. My greatest honour is to be a member of this House, in which all my thoughts and feelings are concentrated; and as for the press, I am myself a ‘gentleman of the press,’ and bear no other scutcheon. I know well the circumstances under which we have obtained in this country the invaluable blessings of a free press.” Yet he

reminded his hearers that it was only a century ago since they themselves had abolished the censorship in their own country; and even when the censorship had ceased, they were under a law of libel which for nearly a century rendered the freedom of the press a most perilous privilege. He hoped that if the press was to be free, it would enjoy a complete freedom; still circumstances could arise which might render the liberty of the press far from desirable.\*

“Suppose,” contended Mr. Disraeli, “that in England at this moment we had the greatest of all political evils—let us suppose that, instead of our happy settlement, we had a disputed succession. Let us suppose that we had a young Charles Stuart, for example, at this moment at Breda, or a young Oliver Cromwell at Bordeaux, publishing their manifestoes and sending their missives to powerful parties of their adherents in this country. We may even suppose other contingencies. Let us suppose that we had had in the course

\* After the Reformation the censorship of the press in England, which had been established upon the discovery of printing, passed with the ecclesiastical supremacy to the crown. A licenser was appointed by the sovereign, without whose sanction no works or pamphlets could be legally published; publications issued without this royal authority brought both author and publisher into dire trouble. At first the power to print was restrained by various patents and monopolies, and under the reign of Elizabeth all printing was prohibited elsewhere than in London, Oxford, and Cambridge; after the Restoration the privilege was extended to York, and the passing of the Licensing Act in 1662 placed the entire control of printing in the hands of the government. Authors of objectionable works were punished by death, flogging, or mutilation, and it was deemed criminal to publish anything, whether of praise or blame, touching the government: a decree which effectually suppressed the few private newspapers then in existence. A few years after the Revolution the Licensing Act expired, and the press was in a measure free. Still the debates in parliament were not permitted to be published; and the stamp duty on newspapers and the law of libel continued to be great hindrances to the development of a really free press. The *Daily Courant*, issued in 1709, was the first daily paper. As we shall see from this biography, the stamp duty was abolished in 1855, and the duty on paper, another drawback to newspaper circulation, in 1861. The law of libel as it then stood was, however, the greatest obstacle to the freedom of discussion in the press. This evil was finally removed by two famous acts. In 1792 the Libel Act of Mr. Fox was passed, which declared the right of juries on any trial or information for libel to give a general verdict of guilty or not guilty on the whole matter. By the Libel Act of Lord Campbell, passed in 1843, it was decreed that the defendant on an indictment or information for a defamatory libel should be allowed to plead its truth, and that its publication was for the public good.

of a few years great revolutions in this country—that the form of our government had been changed—that our free and famous monarchy had been subverted, and that a centralized republic had been established by an energetic minority—that that minority had been insupportable, and that the army had been called in by the people generally to guard them from the excesses which they had experienced. Do you think that under any of these circumstances you would be quite sure of enjoying the same liberty of the press which you enjoy at this moment? Do you think that in the midst of revolutions, with a disputed succession, secret societies, and military rule, you would be quite certain of having your newspapers at your breakfast table every morning? These are considerations which ought to guide us when we are giving an opinion upon the conduct of rulers of other countries.” He wished to speak of the present emperor of the French with all respect; but he candidly owned that he sympathized with the fallen Louis Philippe. “Some years ago,” said Mr. Disraeli, “I had occasion frequently to visit France. I found that country then under the mild sway of a constitutional monarch—of a prince who from temper as well as from policy was humane and beneficent. I know that at that time the press was free. I know that at that time the parliament of France was in existence, and distinguished by its eloquence and by a dialectic power that probably even this, our own House of Commons, has never surpassed. I know that under these circumstances France arrived at a pitch of material prosperity which it had never before reached. I know also that after a reign of unbroken prosperity of long duration, when he was aged, when he was in sorrow, and when he was suffering under overwhelming indisposition, this same prince was rudely expelled from his capital, and was denounced as a poltroon by all the journals of England, because he did not command his troops to fire upon the people. Well, other powers and other princes have

since occupied his seat, who have asserted their authority in a very different way, and are denounced in the same organs as tyrants, because they did order their troops to fire upon the people. I said that I deplore the past and sympathize with the fallen. I think every man has a right to have his feelings upon these subjects; but what is the moral I presume to draw from these circumstances? It is this, that it is extremely difficult to form an opinion upon French politics; and that so long as the French people are exact in their commercial transactions, and friendly in their political relations, it is just as well that we should not interfere with their management of their domestic concerns.” This sentiment was greeted with loud cheers from both sides of the House.

The leader of the Opposition then proceeded to show, by quotations from speeches made in both Houses of Parliament, that Lord John Russell and Earl Grey had on various former occasions expressed their regret at the tone adopted by a large portion of the English press towards the president of France; such a tone they considered was not only imprudent but offensive in the extreme. This brought Mr. Disraeli to the question he wished to ask—What were the views, opinions, and sentiments of the government of Lord Aberdeen on the subject of the relations between England and France? Was he to judge the opinions of the cabinet by the statements of the first lord of the admiralty? Sir James Graham had described the ruler of France, “in one of those pithy sentences which no one prepares with more elaboration,” as a despot who had trampled on the rights and liberties of 40,000,000 of men. Was it by such criticisms, asked Mr. Disraeli, that the cordial understanding with France, which had been so serviceable in various diplomatic and commercial matters during the last few years, was to be maintained? “If I had to form an opinion of the policy of the cabinet,” he sneered, “from the first declaration made by so eminent a member of

it as the first lord of the admiralty, I should certainly be induced to suppose that some great change was about to occur. How are we to account for such a declaration? I will not be so impertinent as to suppose it was an indiscretion. An indiscretion from 'All the Talents'—impossible! Can it then be design? . . . On the hustings there must be allowed some license, though there can be no doubt that whatever liberties you may take with your constituents, a councillor of Her Majesty ought at least to be careful when he speaks of a foreign potentate. . . . The present government tell us that they have no principles, at least not at present.\* Some people are uncharitable enough to suppose that they have not got a policy; but in Heaven's name, why are they ministers if they have no discretion? That is the great quality on which I had thought this cabinet was established. Vast experience, administrative adroitness, safe men who never would blunder—men who might not only take the government without a principle and without a party, but to whom the country ought to be grateful for taking it under such circumstances. Yet at the very outset we find one of the most experienced of these eminent statesmen acting in the teeth of

\* We know how severe the Opposition were upon the Derby cabinet professing free trade to please the towns and Protection to please the farmers. The Aberdeen administration, however, was framed on far more elastic principles. "In my opinion," said Lord Aberdeen in his ministerial statement, "no government in this country is now possible except a Conservative government; and to that I add another declaration, which I take to be as indubitably true, that no government in this country is now possible except a Liberal government. The truth is, that these terms have no definite meaning. . . . I trust, therefore, that in the just acceptance of the word, whatever the measures proposed by the present government may be, they will be Conservative measures as well as Liberal; for I consider both qualities to be essentially necessary." The advantages of this double-shuffle were not lost upon Lord Derby. "I confess," he said, "that it does not convey to my mind any very distinct idea, and I hardly think it can be satisfactory to the country. The advantages to the noble earl are obvious from this vagueness; for whatever his measure he can say he had described it. If it is extreme, and people complain that it goes too far, the noble earl will say, 'Well, did not I tell you I meant to be Liberal?' and if other parties say, 'Oh, this is nothing at all—it is a distinction without a difference,' the noble earl can turn round on them and say, 'Gentlemen, I told you at the outset I would be extremely Conservative.' The noble earl and his colleagues, in fact, so far as they are pledged by his description as given this evening, can do what they like."

the declarations of the noble lord opposite, and of Lord Grey, made in 1852, and holding up to public scorn and indignation the ruler and the people, a good and cordial understanding with whom is the cardinal point of sound statesmanship."

Mr. Disraeli next had to deal with the spiteful and unstatesmanlike utterances of the member for Halifax. Sir Charles Wood had published a very lame apology, declaring that he did not mean to speak offensively of the emperor of the French. "I know," remarked Mr. Disraeli, "that the right hon. gentleman is in the habit of saying very offensive things without meaning it. I know he has outraged the feelings of many individuals without the slightest intention of doing so; and therefore, in reference to so peculiar an organization, I can only say that that is a very awkward accomplishment." Yet if Sir Charles had not meant to be personally offensive to the ruler of France, what did he mean by asserting that the press of Belgium was gagged? Was he aware that Belgium was an independent country, governed by one of the wisest and most accomplished of living princes?† "What a description," cried Mr. Disraeli with just indignation, "is given of the position of the king of the Belgians, to say nothing of the Belgian people, when a minister of Queen Victoria publicly announces to Europe that the king of the Belgians is in a state more humiliating than the slaves who, according to the statement of the first lord of the

† The union of Belgium with Holland by the allies, in 1814, had never been popular. Many were the elements of discord between these two countries. They spoke different languages, had different customs, and opposite commercial interests. Between them was all the bitterness of religious hate. The Dutch were rigid Calvinists, the Belgians bigoted Roman Catholics. The Belgians complained that they were saddled with part of the burthen of the enormous national debt of Holland; that they contributed to the building of Dutch ships and other objects from which they derived no benefit whatever. Their discontent was also increased by the unpopular government of King William I., who treated Belgium like a conquered country. An insurrection broke out at Brussels, and the independence of Belgium was proclaimed November 10, 1830. In the summer of the following year Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg was chosen king of Belgium. So sound was his judgment, and so frequent were the appeals made to him to decide, that King Leopold was nicknamed the "juge de paix de l'Europe."

admiralty, are the subjects of the emperor of France, and that he permits the press of his country to be gagged by a foreign power!" Was such a charge, he asked, substantiated by facts? There was no slight question at stake in the matter, because if the press of Belgium were gagged by a foreign power, where was the independence of that country? and when and at what hour might not England be called on, in conformity with treaties which could not be evaded, to emancipate Belgium from that thralldom? But what were the facts? In Belgium they spoke the French language, and certain newspapers published in that country, and written in the French language, had openly advocated the assassination of the ruler of France. The emperor of the French naturally complained of such flagrant outrages, and had appealed to the sovereign of Belgium.

And, now, what course did the king of the Belgians adopt? "He acted like a wise and able sovereign," replied Mr. Disraeli. "He did not submit to his press being gagged; he made no humiliating concessions; but he felt that the appeal made to him was a just appeal, that the outrage was an unjustifiable outrage; and he went to his own free parliament and said that it was an intolerable grievance that a neighbouring prince should be held up to assassination by newspapers in Belgium, and in the language read by his own subjects; and he appealed to that parliament to do what was proper. And what was the course of the free parliament of Belgium? I believe, without a dissentient voice, certainly without any important opposition, they passed a law declaring that papers in the French language, or in any language, should not be published in Belgium that recommended the assassination of neighbouring princes; and thus, in the most efficient and constitutional manner, that consummate sovereign terminated a difficulty which threatened his country, in a way most honourable to all parties.

And yet it was not a newspaper, it was not one of those vile prints that counsel assassination, that made the statement that the press of Belgium is gagged, but a councillor of Queen Victoria, an experienced statesman, a statesman selected to sit in the councils of the government (where there is no regard to the principles of the gentlemen who compose it, as that is a question of second-rate importance), selected to take office on account of his admirable discretion, his unfailing judgment, and the certainty that under no circumstances he would say or do anything that could commit his colleagues."

After a few sarcasms upon experienced cabinet ministers babbling recklessly on the hustings, and some remarks as to the importance, in the present state of the Eastern question, of fully maintaining our former cordial relations with France, Mr. Disraeli thus concluded:—

"We have at this moment," he said, alluding to the present state of parties in the House of Commons, "a Conservative ministry and a Conservative opposition. Where the great Liberal party is I pretend not to know. Where are the Whigs with their great traditions—two centuries of parliamentary lustre and deeds of noble patriotism? There is no one to answer. Where are the youthful energies of Radicalism—its buoyant expectations—its sanguine hopes? Awakened, I fear, from the first dream of that ardent inexperience which finds itself at the same moment used and discarded—used without compunction, and not discarded with too much decency. Where are the Radicals? Is there a man in the House who declares himself to be a Radical? (A voice, "Yes!") Oh no!" laughed Mr. Disraeli; "you would be afraid of being caught and changed into a Conservative minister. Well, how has this curious state of things been brought about? What is the machinery by which it has been effected—the secret system that has brought on this portentous political calamity?" Then he

proceeded to answer these questions by attributing the change to the political creed promulgated by Sir James Graham, who had ostentatiously announced that he took his stand upon progress. "Well," continued Mr. Disraeli, "we have now got a ministry of progress, and every one stands still. We never hear the word 'reform' now: it is no longer a ministry of reform; it is a ministry of progress, every member of which agrees to do nothing. All difficult questions are suspended. All questions which cannot be agreed upon are open questions. Now, I do not want to be unreasonable, but I think there ought to be some limit to this system of open questions. It is a system which has hitherto prevailed only partially in this country, and which never has prevailed with any advantage to it. Let us at least fix some limit to it. Let parliamentary reform, let the ballot, be open questions if you please; let every institution in church and state be open questions; but, at least, let your answer to me to-night prove that among your open questions you are not going to make an open question of the peace of Europe."

A few days after this speech, Lord John Russell resigned the seals of the foreign office to Lord Clarendon, on the plea that to act in the dual capacity of foreign secretary and leader of the House of Commons was a strain upon his health to which he felt unequal. Some months later he was appointed lord president of the council. It was alleged at the time that there had been a difference in the cabinet as to the policy to be pursued towards the emperor of the French.

The financial condition of the country was the next subject of importance which came before the popular chamber to be discussed. Unlike that of his predecessor, the appointment of Mr. Gladstone as chancellor of the exchequer was hailed with almost universal satisfaction. With the exception of the landed interest, who knew that the member for the University

of Oxford was not over favourably disposed to their claims, all approved of the selection of one who had made finance his special study—who had proved his abilities under Sir Robert Peel, and who had since by his parliamentary speeches shown himself a financial critic of no ordinary capacity—to the post of keeper of the national purse. The most sanguine expectations were entertained as to the budget Mr. Gladstone was preparing. Taxation was to be reduced, and yet a surplus guaranteed. There was to be no affectation of originality in the schemes that were being drawn up, there were to be no delusive speculations, no flashy promises that could never be fulfilled, or the like; but everything was to be sound, practical, and eminently businesslike.

In a speech of five hours, Mr. Gladstone (Feb. 18, 1853) expounded before a crowded house his financial statement. Briefly stated, it was as follows:—The tea duty (thanks to Mr. Disraeli's suggestion) was to be reduced by one shilling a pound, and the reduction was to be spread over three years; the duty on soap was to be abolished at once and altogether. Mr. Gladstone confessed himself unequal to the equitable adjustment of the income tax, and therefore proposed its entire abolition after a gradual diminution which was to cover a period of seven years. The tax was to be extended to Ireland; but, as an equivalent, the consolidated annuities were to be abandoned. The tariff was to be reformed; 133 articles were to be completely struck out; whilst the duties on foreign butter, cheese, fruit, &c., were to be considerably reduced. The duty on private carriages, horses, and dogs was also to be lowered. The duty on advertisements was reduced to sixpence, and the duty on each newspaper, without regard to its size, was to be fixed at one penny. The scale of licenses was to be rectified so as to make it bear some proportion to the value of the premises rented or business done. To meet the deficiency created by

the remission of taxation, it was proposed to raise £2,000,000 a year by extending the legacy duty to all successions, and by abolishing the exemption which real property had hitherto enjoyed. It was also intended to increase the duty on Scotch spirits by one shilling a gallon, and the duty on Irish spirits by eightpence a gallon. The balance anticipated in the ensuing financial year was estimated at £493,000.

Such, curtly condensed, were the chief proposals laid before the House by Mr. Gladstone in his first budget. To the country at large the measure was popular. The consuming classes on limited incomes saw that they could live cheaper by the various remissions in the tariff; the better classes were pleased with the reduction of the duty on carriages, horses, and dogs; whilst the mercantile classes expected such remissions and reductions to give a stimulus to trade. As cleanliness is next to godliness, the abolition of the tax on soap was also received with much approval. To that large population who are ever ventilating their requirements through the newspapers, the reduction of the duty on advertisements was also welcome. The two great dissentients to the financial scheme were the Irish and the country party. The Irish loudly declared that Ireland was being taxed, contrary to the clauses of the Act of Union, out of proportion to her ability; whilst the country party complained that, instead of any relief being granted to owners or occupiers of land, the revision of the tariff would be a severe blow to the farming interest, whilst the tax upon succession would tend to break up the great landed aristocracy of the country. The continuance of the income tax for seven years also encountered much hostility.

Mr. Disraeli opposed the budget on two separate occasions. The first time was when he spoke (May 2, 1853) in favour of Sir Bulwer Lytton's amendment, "That the continuance of the income tax for seven years, and its extension to parties heretofore exempt from its operation, without any mitigation of the inequalities of its assess-

ment, are alike unjust and impolitic." The second time (May 9) was also on the income tax, when the House went into committee of ways and means. In these two speeches he summed up all the objections of the Opposition to the measure.

The general principles on which the financial policy of Mr. Gladstone was based met with his approval. "I find," said Mr. Disraeli triumphantly, "the principles on which he has formed his policy are identical with the principles which, only four months ago, on two occasions on the other side of the table, I endeavoured to impress on the consideration of the House." The process was the same, though the application of the principles might be different. What the Conservatives had suggested had been adopted; their financial policy had been assimilated to their new commercial system; the deficiency created by the remission of taxation had been supplied by new imposts; and the chancellor of the exchequer had not shrunk from attempting to deal with more than the current financial year. These had been all schemes which he, Mr. Disraeli, had recommended in his own financial statement. He amused the House by quoting extracts from the speeches of various members now seated on the ministerial side, but who, when they were in opposition, had condemned the very measures they now approved of. Mr. Lowe had censured Mr. Disraeli, when chancellor of the exchequer, for offering to the country a financial policy for two years. "The wisest man," Mr. Lowe had said, "would have enough to do in attempting to arrive at a correct view of the financial condition of a great country even for a single year." "But now," retorted Mr. Disraeli, "we have a budget for seven years; and not content with this, not content with regulating our commercial arrangements and taxes for that time, they are entering upon financial operations that fix the rate of interest for nearly half a century. Really, for statesmen who will not say one thing to-day and another to-morrow to win an ephemeral popularity, for men who will not sacrifice



their opinions for an object of such a character, I think this is rather a troublesome contrast to have occurred within the space of four months, the only difference in the circumstances of the case being, that the honourable member for Kidderminster of four months ago (Mr. Lowe) is now the secretary of the board of control."

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to criticise the budget in detail. He objected to the income tax being continued for seven years; for he was not in favour of those new-fangled doctrines which asserted that it was dangerous to have a large amount of revenue dependent on the annual vote of parliament. Nor did he approve of the manner in which the income tax was to be assessed; for he plainly showed that as the impost was levied at the same rate upon the profits of trade—which were of the nature of a terminable annuity—as upon the interest derived from realized property, it pressed unjustly upon the great supporters of the government—the commercial classes. He did not believe, said Mr. Disraeli, with his usual prescience, that at the end of seven years, as Mr. Gladstone had stated, the income tax would be abolished. The spirit of the age was hostile to the abrogation of that tax. Considering the circumstances which had occurred during the last ten years, a man must shut his eyes to all that passed around him, and be incapable of perceiving the signs of the times—the thoughts and habits of his fellow-men—if he could suppose that the income tax would not take a perpetual place in their revenue. Therefore, if the income tax was to become a permanent item in the finance of the country, as he felt sure it would become, was it wise to extend it to new classes and countries, without attempting to mitigate its injustice and inequalities? "But if this tax is not to be mitigated," said Mr. Disraeli, "and if its inequalities and its injustice are to baffle both ministers and legislature, the best thing to do is to apply your surplus and accruing income as you receive it, to the reduction of an impost which no min-

ister can manage and no people can long endure."

With regard, continued the leader of the Opposition, to the general opinion which he entertained respecting the financial policy recommended by Mr. Gladstone, his great objection to it was because it was conceived in a spirit of injustice to the land. The imperial revenue amounted to some £40,000,000 annually, and one-fourth of that revenue was raised by a duty upon a single crop of the British farmer. The average of the united duties levied directly or indirectly upon barley was upwards of 230 per cent. By the reduction of the tea duties, tea would be brought into increased competition with those beverages which were prepared from the productions of the British farmer. Tea would probably become a substitute for spirits and beer, which were produced from barley. The farmer would have to contend against China and France, and yet was not to be relieved from his burdens. If they lessened the indirect taxation upon Chinese tea and upon French wines, they were bound simultaneously to reduce the enormous imposts that existed upon the malt and spirits made from British produce. No one could question the policy or the wisdom or the justice of such a proposition. Yet the government preferred to take an exactly opposite course. Practically they said this to the English farmer and producer—"You will meet this increased competition with increased indirect imposts, and in addition to all this, to sustain you in the contest, we are going to put on you an income tax." "That," said Mr. Disraeli, "is the position of the cultivator of the soil. What is the condition of the proprietor of the soil—the proprietor of the soil, who has been told to devote his capital to the improvement of his estate? You are going to propose a tax, which you call extending the legacy duties to land, which will act as a direct tax of very considerable amount upon all real property, and of course if upon all real

property, in a very great degree, if not mainly, upon the land."

He also strongly objected to the tax on successions as unsound in principle. It was a tax on capital. It was unsound in principle with regard to personal property; but it was much more unsound in principle with regard to landed property, because it led to partition, which, in his opinion, was a very great evil, and much to be deprecated. And again, by proposing this tax on successions with reference to landed property, the government were imposing a new tax upon the land already bowed down beneath its burdens. Instead of real property being relieved from the vast load of local taxation by which it was depressed, it had to sustain additional hardships. It had to pay the income tax and it had to pay a legacy duty. It was for those reasons he affirmed that the whole scope of the budget was conceived in a spirit hostile to the landed interest, and therefore could not meet with his approval. Mr. Disraeli then instituted a comparison between the manner in which the chancellor of the exchequer treated the retail tradesman, and the manner in which he treated the farmer. The project for the licenses of trades entertained by Mr. Gladstone had encountered much opposition from different tradesmen; and at the first murmur the chancellor of the exchequer had hinted that the scale would be altered. "Now, mark the difference," cried Mr. Disraeli, "when a particular class of the population of the towns is concerned in matters of taxation, and when you deal with those who are connected with the land. There is not the slightest doubt I take it for granted that the chancellor of the exchequer would never have proposed the licenses unless he believed them to be just and proper, and not only just, but politic. Well, but he changes his opinion in twenty-four hours, when the trades rise and tell him they will not endure it. But the farmer must bear his income tax, the proprietor of the soil must bear his increased burden of direct taxation,

the cultivator must find his burden of indirect taxation unnecessarily and enormously aggravated, while he has fresh rivals in the field in the article he produces. He murmurs, but he is to get no relief. But the instant a particular class in the country are touched by the minister of finance, orders are given, the delegates wait, and the minister trembles." The country party, he complained, should not be treated with this marked indifference. The towns should not be treated with this marked favouritism. It had been said that the budget was a great triumph for Manchester. He regretted to hear such a remark. He had hoped that the old feud between town and country had ceased for ever. There existed no difference of material interests any longer between town and country.

Then, ever true to the welfare of the land and to the beneficial influence it had exercised in seasons of crisis, the leader of the Opposition thus concluded his effective criticism:—"There is no class," he said, "which has struggled more for the rights and liberties of the people than the country gentlemen; no class has less interest in the corrupt administration of affairs, and no class has a greater interest in the economical administration of those affairs. Gentlemen are very apt to tell us of the weight and importance of the great towns, and that this budget was supported by the members for those great towns. I have already said that there is no longer any difference of material interests between the people of the great towns and the people of the country. But I am told that there are social and political differences. I am very loth to believe it. I cannot but believe that it will be remembered that these great towns are situate in a country of no considerable extent; with no excessive population, with a commerce which, however great, has been equalled; and with manufactures which, however successful, have been surpassed. What then makes the country great? The national character of the country created by its institutions, and by the traditionary

influence impressed upon those institutions. Those institutions are deeply and broadly planted in the soil, and that soil is not the possession of any exclusive class. The merchant or the manufacturer may deposit within it his accumulated capital, and he may enjoy those privileges to which its possession entitles him, on condition that he discharges those duties which its possession also imposes. Then why this hostility to the land? Every man is deeply interested in maintaining its influence. I, therefore, adjure those gentlemen who are the representatives of large towns, to condescend to ponder over these observations, and not to be led away by prejudices; remembering, that we are all alike interested in maintaining the greatness of our country, and that that greatness depends upon its institutions as well as its material prosperity. Should, however, as I trust not, the representatives of towns take another course, then of this I feel convinced, that if they are still alienated from us—if they still proceed in their illusory progress, they may, perhaps, arrive at the goal which they contemplate, they may perhaps achieve the object they have set before them; but I believe they will be greatly disappointed in the result, and that they will only find that they have changed a first-rate kingdom into a second-rate republic."

We who, during two miserable decades, remember how baneful upon the prestige of the country has been the influence of recent Liberalism—when the extension of commerce appeared as the sole aim of English politics—have had good reason to make our moan over the fulfilment of the prophecy of Mr. Disraeli. We know what it is to have seen a first-rate kingdom exercising the authority and holding the position of a second-rate republic. Bitter experience has taught us what we have to expect from a political creed deprived of all manliness, and animated by no patriotism. We are not to be deceived by the new nomenclature of things; for Liberalism treats its policy as men treat their vices—

designating the worst actions by the best names. It panders to pusillanimity, and calls it arbitration; it submits to foreign exactions, and calls it diplomacy; it impairs efficiency by reduction, and calls it economy; it sues for peace when under humiliating defeat, and calls it "obedience to the dictates of humanity;" it inspires class-jealousies, and calls it reform; it burlesques rule, and calls it statesmanship: confounding compromise with courage and commercial prosperity with national glory, Liberalism has exhibited to a sneering Europe how easy it is to transform a first-rate kingdom into a second-rate republic. For a few proud years Englishmen ceased to be ashamed of themselves and their country; but now the period of humiliation has again arrived. Lord Beaconsfield gave us the treaty of Berlin: Mr. Gladstone has given us the Transvaal Convention.

But matters of far graver moment than insults passed upon a friendly sovereign, or erroneous projects of finance, were to engage the criticism of the leader of the Opposition. After a peaceful pause of well-nigh forty years, England was to drift into a European war. The causes which led to hostilities in the Crimea have been so fully treated elsewhere, that we shall but touch upon them as they tend to elucidate the policy of Mr. Disraeli. For many years the guardianship and possession of certain places at Jerusalem had been a source of contention between Christians professing the faith of the Latin and Greek churches. These localities, known as the Holy Places, are hallowed from an alleged connection with the Redeemer of mankind, with the Blessed Virgin, or with some of the early disciples. The church of the Holy Sepulchre built upon Mount Calvary, and in which the sepulchre of Christ is said to exist, occupies the most prominent position among these sacred spots. Towards the close of the seventeenth century this Holy Sepulchre was appropriated to the Latins; and though other Christians were allowed to enter it for the purpose of



Si à toute époque les Empereurs de Russie ont témoigné



The Czar, thanks to the vacillation of Lord Aberdeen, and to the sneers of the Liberals at the emperor of the French, was under the impression that England would never fight, that the alliance between England and France was only a sham, and that the struggle would simply be limited to Turkey and Russia; in which case the Muscovite would prove an easy victor. The strained relationship between the two countries now gave way, and Turkey declared war against Russia, October 5, 1853. Shortly after the wrecking of the Turkish fleet at Sinope by the Russians, the congress at Vienna addressed another note to the Porte, expressing the regret of the great powers at the war, and requesting information as to the conditions on which Turkey would treat for peace. In reply the Porte named four points as bases of negotiation:—

leur active sollicitude pour le maintien des immunités et privilèges de l'Eglise Orthodoxe Grecque dans l'Empire Ottoman, les Sultans ne se sont jamais refusés à les consacrer\* de nouveau par des actes solennels qui attestaient de leur ancienne et constante bienveillance à l'égard de leurs sujets Chrétiens.

Sa Majesté le Sultan Abdul-Medjid, aujourd'hui régnant, animé des mêmes dispositions et voulant donner à Sa Majesté l'Empereur de Russie un témoignage personnel de son amitié la plus sincère, n'a écouté que sa confiance infinie dans les qualités éminentes de son auguste ami et allié, et a daigné prendre en sérieuse considération les représentations dont son Altesse le Prince de Mentschikoff s'est rendu l'organe auprès de la Sublime Porte.

Le Soussigné a reçu en conséquence l'ordre de déclarer par la présente que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté le Sultan restera fidèle à la lettre et à l'esprit des stipulations des Traités de Kainardji et d'Andrinople, relatives à la protection du culte Chrétien,† et que Sa Majesté regarde comme étant de son honneur de faire observer à tout jamais, et de préserver de toute atteinte, soit présentement, soit dans l'avenir, la jouissance des privilèges spirituels qui ont été accordés par les augustes aïeux de Sa Majesté à l'Eglise Orthodoxe de l'Orient, qui sont maintenus et confirmés par elle; et, en outre, à faire participer dans un esprit de haute équité le rit Grec aux avantages concédés aux autres rites Chrétiens par Convention ou disposition particulière.‡

Au reste, comme le firman Impérial qui vient d'être donné au patriarche et au clergé Grec, et qui contient les confirmations de leurs privilèges spirituels, devra être regardé comme une nouvelle preuve de ses nobles sentiments, et comme, en outre, la proclamation de ce firman, qui donne toute sécurité, devra faire disparaître toute crainte à l'égard du rit qui est la religion de Sa Majesté l'Empereur de Russie; je suis heureux d'être chargé du devoir de faire la présente notification.

\* Le culte et l'Eglise Orthodoxe Grecque, les Sultans n'ont jamais cessé de veiller au maintien des immunités et privilèges qu'ils ont spontanément accordés à diverses reprises à ce culte et à cette Eglise dans l'Empire Ottoman, et de les consacrer.

† Aux stipulations du Traité de Kainardji confirmé par celui d'Andrinople, relatives à la protection par la Sublime Porte de la religion Chrétienne, et il est en outre chargé de faire connaître.

‡ Octroyés, on qui seraient octroyés, aux autres communautés Chrétiennes, sujettes Ottomanes.

1. The promptest possible evacuation of the Danubian principalities; 2. Revision of the treaties; 3. The maintenance of religious privileges to the communities of all confessions; and 4. A definite settlement of the convention respecting the holy places. These points were approved of by the four great powers.

While these events were occurring, the greatest excitement prevailed in London. All through the month of September the country was holding agitated meetings to rouse the government into decided action, and make it abandon its course of culpable delay and irresolution. The cabinet was divided. Lord Aberdeen still hoped that peace might be restored by the efforts of diplomacy. Lord Palmerston, on the contrary, who was the only minister who thoroughly understood the intricacies of the Eastern question, was most anxious that the united English and French fleets, then anchored in Besika Bay, should be ordered to take up their position in the Black Sea. He was overruled, and for a time withdrew from the cabinet on the ground, which deceived no one, that he differed from Lord John Russell as to the measure relating to parliamentary reform, which was about to be laid before the House of Commons. But the country cared nothing at this exciting moment for parliamentary reform, but much as to the development of the Eastern question. The course of events proved that unless England was prepared to encourage Russian aggression, and to place her own Indian empire in jeopardy, she must shake off Aberdeen apathy and delay, and resort to active measures. Lord Palmerston returned to the cabinet, and his views were accepted. The allied squadrons entered the Black Sea, resolved to teach the Russian fleet that there should be no repetition of "the massacre of Sinope." War had not been declared; but everyone felt that it was only a matter of weeks, perhaps of days, before the allied powers and the isolated Muscovite would be at daggers drawn.



Parliament met January 30, 1854. The speech from the throne was guarded, yet showed that the country was prepared for the worst. "The hopes," said Her Majesty, "which I expressed at the close of the last session, that a speedy settlement would be effected of the differences existing between Russia and the Ottoman Porte, have not been realized, and I regret to say that a state of warfare has ensued. I have continued to act in cordial co-operation with the emperor of the French; and my endeavours to preserve and to restore peace between the contending parties, although hitherto unsuccessful, have been unremitting. I will not fail to persevere in these endeavours; but as the continuance of the war may deeply affect the interests of the country and of Europe, I think it requisite to make a further augmentation of my naval and military forces, with the view of supporting my representations, and of more effectually contributing to the restoration of peace." Then with misplaced activity, as if, with the prospect of a grave European war on their hands, ministers had not sufficient to occupy the whole of their attention, mention was made of the measures the cabinet intended to introduce during the present session. The coasting trade of the United Kingdom was to be opened to the ships of all friendly nations. The system of admission into the civil service was to be altered. The laws relating to the representation of the Commons in parliament were to be amended. Precautions were to be taken against the evils of bribery and of corrupt practices at elections. Nor was university reform to be neglected. Not without reason was the Aberdeen cabinet called "All the Talents," when at so supreme a moment in the fortunes of the country it could think of such minor details as to how young men were to become clerks in government offices; how electors were to be prevented from selling their votes; and how one of our two great schools of learning was to be improved. Perhaps, had the government limited its range of

supervision, its grasp of public business would have been firmer and more tenacious.

The tone of the debate that ensued was manly, without braggadocio. England had endeavoured by every means of forbearance consistent with her national honour to avoid hostilities; but now, if she was to have war, it behoved her to carry it on as became a nation conscious of her strength. Such was the keynote struck by most of the speeches. The tactics of Russia hoodwinked no one. "The whole policy of Russia," said Lord Derby, "for the last 150 years has been a policy of gradual aggression—not a policy of conquest, but of aggression. It has never proceeded by storm, but by sap and mine. The first process has been invariably that of fomenting discontent and dissatisfaction amongst the subjects of subordinate states—then proffering mediation; then offering assistance to the weaker party; then placing that independence under the protection of Russia; and finally from protection proceeding to the incorporation, one by one, of those states into the gigantic body of the Russian empire. I say nothing of Poland, or of Livonia, but I speak of Mingrelia, Imeritia, and the countries of the Caspian, even as far as the boundary of the Araxes; and again, of the Crimea itself. But this has been the one course which Russia has invariably pursued; although she has pursued this steady course for 150 years, she has from time to time desisted from her schemes where she has found that they met with opposition, and has never carried one of those schemes into effect where she has been certain to meet the opposition of this country."

In the Lower House Mr. Disraeli delivered a short but keen criticism upon the foreign and domestic policy of the government. An eye-witness describes his personal appearance on this occasion: "On the first row next the table, about mid-way, and near to one of the two green velvet-covered, brass-ornamented boxes, which flank a small collection of well-bound books, in

front of which the mace reposes, sits the ex-leader of the House and ex-chancellor of the exchequer, Mr. Disraeli. Familiar as his appearance has been made by the pictorial squibs of the day, scant justice has been done to him even in caricatures. He has nothing of the hollow-eyed, round-backed, Jew-boy look, which has been so liberally bestowed on him. If it be true that his countenance does not come up to the English standard of manly beauty, and if it is strongly indicative of race—and that neither Norman nor Saxon—yet an impartial and candid observer would admit that it has a character striking and even distinguished. He is neither tall nor is he short; he is rather thin; his forehead is high, rounded, and smooth; he has black eye-brows, clear, dark-brown eyes, high cheek-bones, lips firmly set, a pointed chin, and black hair, curling like tendrils all over his compact head, of which one curl is intended to droop carelessly over the brow, but somehow seems to have been got into its place with pains. So of his dress it may be said that it is elaborated into carelessness; but the art is not sufficiently artfully concealed. Its details, its minutiae, are studiously correct. He sits sunk into his seat; his head, always uncovered, reclining forward, so that his eyes appear to be fixed on the ground or staring at vacancy—which they by no means are—and his whole attitude that of the most rigid repose, till what he conceives to be the right moment for being aroused arrives, and the listlessness—which, added to the paleness of his complexion, would seem significant of fragility of body or ill health—is cast off for animation and vigour, equal to a sustained speech of five hours and a half."

On this occasion, when he condemned the credulity and vacillation of the government during their negotiations with Russia, Mr. Disraeli did not speak for five hours and a half; but vigour and animation were certainly not wanting. He complained that the expectations held out by ministers at the end of last session, as to an immediate

and satisfactory conclusion of the Eastern question, had not been fulfilled. Diplomacy had made no progress. The House was addressed now much in the same terms as it had been then. They were told that negotiations were going on, and that a hope was still held out that those negotiations might be successful. If the government had really resolved to maintain not only the integrity but the independence of the Porte, he regretted the unwise and unnecessary timidity in the language of the address. The tone taken in the speech and address with regard to these transactions between the Porte and Russia, should have been of a higher character. He had heard, however, with pleasure of the cordial co-operation of the queen with the emperor of the French. "I cannot fail to remember," he said, alluding to the past strictures of Sir Charles Wood and Sir James Graham upon the 'despotism' of Napoleon, "though I have no inclination to dwell upon the circumstance at this moment, that little more than twelve months ago, I felt it my duty to call the attention of the House to the relations between this country and France. I thought it my duty to attempt to call the attention of parliament and of the country to certain expressions and certain conduct of eminent personages who, from their abilities and their station, were able to influence public opinion—which expressions and conduct, I was convinced, had a tendency to weaken that good feeling between England and France which, under all circumstances, should be cherished; but which, under the then and present aspect of affairs, was doubly desirable and important. I remember I was told then that my observations were factious observations; but I appeal for my vindication to the language which is now held in Her Majesty's speech."\*

Mr. Disraeli admitted that the political

\* "I have continued to act in cordial co-operation with the emperor of the French; and my endeavours, in conjunction with my allies, to preserve and to restore peace between the contending parties, although hitherto unsuccessful, have been unremitting."—*The Queen's Speech*, Jan. 31, 1854.



outlook was gloomy; still the programme put forth by the cabinet cheered him. "I can hardly conceive," he said, "that a body of men who are about to embark in—I will not say a great European struggle, though that is the common phrase—but which, in fact, is not only a European but an Asiatic struggle, which indeed may stretch into a third quarter of the globe—for Russia has not only European, but Asiatic and American territories—I say I cannot conceive that a body of statesmen who believe that we are about to embark in such a conflict, who are now preparing to meet such an awful conjuncture—I cannot believe that any body of statesmen so placed would have asked us not only to reform the whole of our civil service, not only to reform the ecclesiastical courts, not only to reform the poor law, but even to reform the House of Commons. Sir, I came down here to-day with some fear—as many of us had—of some awful disclosure, of some terrible announcement that was about to be made to us. I thought we were going to make war upon the emperor of Russia. I find we are only going to make war upon ourselves."

Then discussing the question of parliamentary reform, he said, however inconvenient or unadvisable it might be to introduce such a subject at the present moment, the government were bound to carry out their pledges. The prime minister had formed his cabinet on the principle of the necessity of parliamentary reform—of a large measure of parliamentary reform. Certain members of the government had made parliamentary reform the condition of their acceptance of office. Evasion of such a pledge was therefore impossible. "It may be unwise," said Mr. Disraeli, "that parliamentary reform should be introduced under any circumstances; it may be little short of madness to introduce it under the present existing circumstances; but the ministers must bring in a large measure of parliamentary reform." There was no hope for it; both political and personal honour

demanding it. It was true that Mr. Pitt had pledged himself to parliamentary reform, and that when pressed by a foreign war he had not hesitated to act in opposition to his former opinions. But that precedent would not apply to the present advisers of the crown. Only a short time since, when it was expected that the country was about to be invaded by France, Lord John Russell had reiterated the necessity for parliamentary reform. A war with Russia was no graver than a war with France; and if parliamentary reform was an absolute necessity when we were anticipating hostilities with the Gaul, it was therefore no less a necessity when we were anticipating hostilities with the Muscovite. As soon as the subject of reform came before them he would offer his humble opinions upon it, and he would then point out, as he had before pointed out, with what extraordinary injustice the landed proprietors of the country, and all classes connected with land, had been treated with respect to the representation in the House. "When you appeal to the passions," he concluded, "and dwell upon the importance of what you call the large towns, the fact is, that there are vast populations still larger than the largest towns which are represented only in a most imperfect manner, and who have not nearly the number of members which, according to your principles, they are entitled to. When we come to this large measure, when we come to this bold proposition, as we have been informed, of disfranchisement, when we have to add them to that horde of forfeited seats which the noble lord has been so long and so sedulously accumulating, we shall come forward not with clamour, not with that organized arrangement which is brought into play whenever anything is demanded by what are called the large towns; but we shall come down to the House of Commons and appeal to facts—we shall appeal to principles—we shall ask you to apply your own facts and principles, and to do us justice: but remember at the same time,



that if you award to us that which we supplicate, you will at the same time add strength and reverence to the constitution of England."

The diplomatic relations between the courts of London and St. Petersburg were in so curious a condition that it was not easy to ascertain whether we were at peace or war. "It was a question," said Lord Clarendon, "which it was difficult to answer. We were not at war, because war was not declared, nor were we strictly at peace with Russia. We were in that intermediate state when the desire of peace was just as sincere as ever, but when the hopes of the government were gradually dwindling away, and they were drifting towards war." Meanwhile, every preparation was being made for the active hostilities that might at any moment be declared. The Guards were getting ready for embarkation; volunteers were freely enrolling themselves for foreign service; the transports were rapidly being put into commission to carry troops to the Bosphorus; the government gun-powder mills were working overtime; the Baltic fleet had received orders to sail to the North Sea; the excitement throughout the country was indeed far more indicative of war than peace.

Again (February 20, 1854), the question as to the position of England with regard to Russia came before the House of Commons. Mr. Layard, in a most able speech, introduced the subject, and a long debate ensued, in which Mr. Disraeli took a very important part. He thought it essential, the leader of the Opposition said, that the fullest information should be had as to the cause and object of the hostilities which now appeared to be inevitable, in order to avoid such a prolongation of the struggle as had occurred in the last great European conflict produced by the French Revolution. Twenty-five years ago there had been a war between Russia and Turkey, in which France and England had taken part against Turkey, and levelled a blow against her at Navarino, which was indirectly the cause

of the perils and perplexing circumstances they had now to consider. "Now, sir," he said, "I have always felt, that if ever this country were embarked again in a war which might become one of magnitude, if I were in a position which might in any way allow me to induce the people of this country to understand the cause and the object of the struggle in which they were about to engage, I certainly would make the attempt. I have even thought that every nation, this nation in particular, would be much more prepared, and much more willing to make the exertion and to endure the burdens which a state of warfare must induce and occasion, if they really knew why they were going to war, and for what they were going to war, than if they were hurried into a contest by inflammatory appeals to their passions, and carried away by an excitement which at the first moment may be convenient to a minister, but which in a short time is followed by the inevitable reaction of ignorance, perhaps of ignorance and disaster combined."

The only way, he continued, in which he could secure the information which he desired to impart was by "pottering over blue books."\* He knew no other source from which he could obtain any knowledge as to the cause of the war. Why were there such things as blue books if they were not to be consulted? What was the intention of those state secrets and those important documents being placed upon the table of the House and submitted to the consideration of members, if, on the first occasion that presented itself to offer an opinion, a minister of the crown rose up and told them they were not to "potter over blue books?" He had pottered over blue books, and he there saw how the present state of things had been produced. The policy of Russia was obviously to obtain an ascendancy over Turkey, not by conquest, but to exercise a particular influence over 12,000,000 of the Sultan's

\* Sir James Graham, with his customary courtesy, had sneered at the Opposition for "pottering over blue books," in order to indulge in miserable carping at petty details.—*Speech on Russia and the Porte*, February 17, 1854.

subjects. That was the base of the diplomatic campaign which ensued. The English government had been vacillating and had been hoodwinked. After the question of the Holy Places had been admitted to have been settled, and the forces of Russia were still hovering on the Turkish frontiers, why was an explanation not required of what was meant? Russia had demanded a concession to the Greek Church as an equivalent for the concession made to the Latin Church, but no demand was made by the English government for an explanation of what was wanted. Then followed this stinging criticism:—

"Let us try," said Mr. Disraeli, "to find out the cause of this war. My Lord Clarendon talks in one of his letters of an alternative, and I shall offer an alternative also. Either the government was influenced by a degree of confidence which assumed the morbid character of credulity, or they were influenced by connivance—I mean by connivance a policy which calculated that it was better that the inevitable dissolution of the Turkish empire should take place by the indirect means alluded to, than that its independence and integrity should disappear in an European war undertaken to maintain them. Now that is an alternative important to decide. Was it credulity or was it connivance? On ascertaining that point depends our also ascertaining the object of this war. I believe the cause of the war has been the conduct of these negotiations during these first seven months by the government. If that conduct has been prompted by credulity, they may carry on the war with success and spirit. The fact that they have been deceived by the word of an emperor may be a mournful fact. It is a lamentable circumstance, but it is an accident to which generous minds may be liable; and the very fact that they are undeceived may animate them to greater exertions and to efforts which will vindicate their conduct to their country and to posterity. If their conduct had been influenced by credulity, it is possible that

you may have a war—a long and a severe war—but it will be a war carried on for great objects, and may end in great public benefit. Russia, by her perfidious conduct—if it has been perfidious—may have precipitated a struggle which perhaps was inevitable. Russia may be forced at the end of this struggle to a position which may secure the independence of Europe and the safety of civilization. You may have a war which may restore Bessarabia to the Porte—may convert the Crimea into an independent country, destined to flourish under the guarantee of the great powers—a war that may make the Danube a free river and the Euxine a free sea; but all this is dependent upon the somewhat humiliating but comparatively pardonable circumstance—that the conduct of Her Majesty's government has been the consequence of credulity. But let us for a moment contemplate the results of the alternative. If their conduct has been suggested by connivance, you may have a war; but it will be a war carried on by connivance—a timid war—a vacillating war—a war with no results, or rather with the exact results which were originally intended. It will not be a war which will place Russia in that position which we think necessary for the security of Europe and our country; but it will be a war which will end with some transaction similar to Prince Mentschikoff's note, or to the arrangements of the Vienna conference. Now these are two results so far opposed—so very different and so very opposite—one I believe so welcome to the people of this country, the other so entirely unsatisfactory that I think it is the duty of this House, even if we 'potter over blue books,' to try to ascertain the truth of these important facts."

That remarkable diplomatic epistle, the Vienna note, which every one interpreted in a different fashion, was now to attract his attention. It was impossible for him, continued Mr. Disraeli, not to notice it. "Here," he cried, "are all the diplomatic wiseacres of Europe assembled at Vienna



in a conference ; and they draw up a document which Turkey and Russia both agree in ascribing the same meaning to, and which meaning is the one not intended by any of the ministers or diplomatists of Europe who were engaged in the drawing it up." He attributed its vague language, and the diplomatic action consequent upon its production, not to credulity, but to connivance. The cabinet had agreed that there should be no real struggle for the independence and integrity of Turkey, and they would have been very glad by means of a Vienna note to have obtained their purpose. "What are we to think," asked Mr. Disraeli, "of the discrimination of these statesmen? It is very easy to say that the Vienna note was an unfortunate affair, but it is one of the most important political documents since the treaty of Vienna. Here you have the peace of Europe depending, and you have grave statesmen concentrating their intellect on the question, and they produce a note which they themselves now admit to be the greatest failure on record. But I look upon this matter in another spirit. I cannot believe that some of the ablest and most eminent men in England could have produced such a failure or such a document. But if from the first there was a foregone conclusion in the minds of the cabinet, or a majority of it, that the independence and integrity of Turkey was a farce, and that by a conscientious connivance the affair might be settled by means of this note, then we can account for its production and its failure."

During the interval between the failure of the Vienna note and the crossing of the Danube by Omar Pasha, England had adopted the most depreciatory tone towards Turkey. She was "used up;" she was "a sovereignty full of anomaly, full of misery, and full of perplexity;" she was "a pariah in the family of nations." Suddenly this tone of disparagement ceased. "Now," inquired Mr. Disraeli, always a believer in the vitality and heroism of the Ottoman, "what was it that changed the aspect and

fortunes of Turkey? What was it that gave a new impulse to the cabinet? It was not diplomacy, not the Vienna note, not instructions to ambassadors, depreciating the energy of the land they affected to save—not that accumulated mass of trifling, or worse than trifling, which we have upon our table; no, it was the energy of the Turks themselves—the valour and patriotic spirit of the people, whom the honourable member for the West Riding (Mr. Cobden) reviles—the energy, the patriotism, and the enthusiastic vigour of a 'sovereignty full of anomaly, full of misery, and full of perplexity,' which Europe witnessed and admired, and which, among all classes in England, met with a prompt and generous sympathy. The Danube was crossed, the battle of Oltenitza was won; Russia, which had been accumulating her menacing forces, was beat back by the very men whom your own minister and ambassador had counselled for months to forfeit their independence, and to let their country fall to the ground. But no sooner had the first flush of this good fortune passed over, and a little reaction occurred—no sooner had there been a lull in the public mind, than the policy of credulity or of connivance was at its dirty work again, and the Turks were told, since they had shown themselves capable of fighting successfully for their country, 'not for God's sake to disturb the peace of Europe. Give over this fighting. Respect the feelings of the emperor of Russia.'"

Then Mr. Disraeli alluded to the vacillating orders given by the government to the men-of-war anchored outside the Bosphorus. "The fleets," he cried indignantly, "were ordered to enter the Black Sea; but when we entered the Black Sea, what did we do? Was that a policy of credulity, or a policy of connivance? When I heard of the return of our squadron to Constantinople, I could not help recalling the words of a great orator when he was addressing an assembly not less illustrious than this, when he said: 'O! Athenians, the men



who administer your affairs are men who know not how to make peace or to make war.' " He concluded by expressing his astonishment that Lord John Russell should have been surprised at the resolution arrived at by the Conservatives, not to oppose the vote for men which the government wished immediately to pass. Mr. Disraeli had always ruled, with a generosity seldom displayed by his rivals, that in seasons of crisis it was the duty of the Opposition not to hamper the actions of the government. Party was to give way to patriotism.

"On Friday night," he said, "the noble lord remarked that I had made a most important observation because I rose with the concurrence, indeed at the request of hon. gentlemen on these benches, to state that we should offer no opposition to the vote for men which the noble lord wished immediately to pass. The noble lord was pleased to say that that was an important declaration. I confess myself that I was rather surprised at the somewhat exaggerated view which the noble lord took of those simple words. For whatever might be our opinion of the conduct of the government in the management of those transactions which have led to this terrible conclusion, I cannot suppose that on these benches there could be any difference of opinion as to the duty which we have to fulfil—to support our sovereign and to maintain the honour of our country. I can assure the noble lord that so long as the opposition benches are filled by those who now occupy them, he will at least encounter men who will not despair under any circumstances of the resources and of the fortunes of their country. The noble lord," quietly remarked Mr. Disraeli, as he delivered one of his keen thrusts which never failed to wound, "possesses great historical information, and has great experience of this House. I cannot but believe that the noble lord must have drawn his opinion of those who sit opposite him from his recollection of other and preceding opposi-

tions. I do not know whether on the part of the noble lord it was an impulse of memory or of remorse. But this I can say—for this I can answer on the part of myself and my friends—that no future Wellesley on the banks of the Danube will have to make a bitter record of the efforts of an English Opposition to depreciate his efforts and to ridicule his talents. We shall remember what we believe to be our duty to our country; and however protracted may be the war, however unfortunate may be your counsels, at least we shall never despair of the republic." This pledge was greeted with immense and continued cheering by the Conservatives.

And, now, when the leash which held the dogs of war was on the point of being slipped, when the nation was wrought up to a perfect frenzy of excitement, and when only one subject—the future of the Eastern question—absorbed the minds of all classes, Lord John Russell found himself compelled, as the leader of the Opposition had declared, by all the ties of personal and political honour to fulfil his promise and introduce a scheme to amend the laws relating to the representation of the Commons in parliament. His reform bill was brought in February 13, 1854, but was postponed on March 3, and finally withdrawn on April 11. It proposed to confer the right of voting for both counties and boroughs upon ten pound occupiers, and for boroughs upon six pound occupiers; to create five new special franchises; and to re-arrange certain seats. Mr. Disraeli spoke twice on this occasion—the first time on Lord John's motion for postponement of the second reading, and again on the withdrawal of the measure.

On the motion for postponement Mr. Disraeli said that he was unable to understand the reasons for deferring the bill. The government, he supposed, knew what they were about when they introduced the measure—they knew the state of public business, they knew the state of the country; and why did they now propose to postpone what they had so confidently a few days



ago brought forward? It placed the House in an awkward position. He could not help thinking, looking to the importance of the subject—looking also to the peculiar circumstances in which they found themselves involved—it would have been better if the noble lord, having come to the decision that it was advisable to postpone the measure, had met the House openly at first, and told them that circumstances did not justify him in bringing forward so soon as he intended a measure of parliamentary reform; that he felt himself pledged to introduce a measure of that kind as soon as circumstances admitted it; but that, until he clearly saw he had the power and opportunity of proceeding with the measure, he would not detail to the House the scheme of reform which he meant to introduce. He thought that would have been the wisest and most discreet course for a minister to have taken, because they must remember that reform was a question which had not been hastily taken up by the noble lord and his colleagues. It was now for several years that the noble lord, as minister, or in a position almost as eminent, had been announcing to the House and to the country that he intended to propose a further reform of the House of Commons. The noble lord had the advantage, as first minister, of proposing a measure for the reform of parliament. It was laid on the table; not a single objection was ever made to it by any gentleman who sat on the Conservative side of the House; indeed, no opportunity was ever given to the Opposition of discussing that measure. Thus, a considerable time had now elapsed, and they had on the table another measure of parliamentary reform which had no resemblance to the one introduced two years ago; though the noble lord could not allege that, in consequence of the opposition at that time, or the criticism which it elicited, the measure he now offered was so different in character from its predecessor. Again they were in a position in which there was at least a prospect of the second Reform

Bill of the noble lord not being proceeded with. It was postponed to a distant day. Its projector announced that even he would not pledge himself on that distant day to bring it forward. Its projector might be perfectly justified in the course which he had taken, but in his (Mr. Disraeli's) opinion he ought never to have brought forward the measure in detail if he did not see a fair prospect of advancing it.

The House, he continued, should also consider this point—Was it for the public advantage that a minister of the country should always be laying siege, as it were, to the constitution? It was a very fair thing for a member of the House of Commons, who thought there ought to be great changes in the state, to bring forward his views by way of motion in that House. He generally got defeated by a considerable majority. He renewed his efforts from time to time. If public sympathy was sluggish, his project slept; if circumstances allowed him to bring it forward with more advantage, his project advanced; it might in time be crowned with success. He carried on a constitutional, and not a dangerous agitation. The greatest evil which he had to encounter—the very greatest misfortune he had to experience—was, perhaps, for the House to be counted out, as it once was counted out on parliamentary reform itself. Such a course operated in no manner injurious to the public. But it was a very different thing when a minister announced that he was an agitator against the institutions of the country. The noble lord might be perfectly right in his views on that question, but it was a great disadvantage that a minister of England should be avowedly one who disapproved of the institutions of the country, and did not change them only because he had not the power. Whatever might be the merits of the measure of the noble lord, or of any other measure on the subject which might be introduced by any other minister or gentleman, one great advantage in the constitution was, that it was a thing settled. They lived under a



constitution, of which the essence of its excellency was, that it was something which was established. Now, he wanted to know what had been the position of the House of Commons—of the reformed House of Commons—when for the last four or five years the most eminent man in their assembly, justly possessing the confidence of a great party in the nation, had announced that he disapproved of the character of that institution of the state; that he disapproved of its elements, of the materials of which it was formed; that he thought measures should be passed which should greatly change its character, which should greatly affect its influence—who yet was unable to pass his measures, and nevertheless remained minister of the country.

Look, cried Mr. Disraeli, at the position in which the noble lord had placed the House by introducing his measure in detail, and at the same time not being able to carry it forward. Their supplies had been unanimously voted, and full justice had been rendered to such unanimity. "But, sir," argued Mr. Disraeli, "whatever may be the fortune of this war, we shall not be wise men if we suppose, as in some quarters is flippantly supposed, that it is to be a brief war—that its end is to be accomplished in a moment. It is more prudent to suppose that we are about to embark in a severe, and even a protracted struggle. All men agree that it is wiser to prepare for such a contingency. Well, sir, no ministry, not even a ministry as favoured as those who sit on the bench before me, can suppose that year after year they can proceed with a war of this character always with success, always with enthusiasm on the part of the people, always with ready and generous sympathy on the part of the House of Commons, even on the part of their opponents. There will be moments of gloom, despondency, and discontent. There may be—which God forbid!—there may be disaster. There may be a time when it will be difficult to appeal to the House of Commons for support. You may

not have political parties with the same spirit which now animates them. You may have near divisions on questions of increased or new taxation. The ministry may carry an unpopular tax, or continue an unpopular war, by a very narrow majority; and then, when the people of this country come to look at the majority of twenty, perhaps, which doubles the income tax or reimposes the soap duty, they will say, 'Here are twenty fellows, eighteen of whom ought not to have seats in the House of Commons; here are twelve in Schedule A, there are six in Schedule B; these are the supporters of the government;' the very men whom they have denounced and marked, and branded as persons unworthy of public confidence; and it would be added, 'Yet these are the men who are carrying on war with the Emperor of All the Russias; these are the men who are inflicting colossal imposts on the people of this country.' The weight of such circumstances should alone have made the noble lord hesitate before he introduced his measure in detail, and should certainly make him hesitate before he makes up his mind to relinquish it for ever. In my mind it would be of advantage that the House of Commons should decide upon this scheme. I know the noble lord has already stated that he himself sees no objection to proceeding with a measure of parliamentary reform in a time of war, and of all wars, the one most opportune for parliamentary reform is, according to the noble lord, a Russian war. Those are admissions which have been generously and voluntarily offered to us by the noble lord. I am, therefore, to suppose that the noble lord will find it his duty—difficult as it is to imagine such an event—some day to propose the second reading of this bill."

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to discuss the conditions on which the government of Lord Aberdeen had been formed. "What was," he asked, "to use a word which is not English, and is, perhaps, used too often

here—what was the programme of the existing administration? The noble earl, when a little more than a year ago he acceded to office (it is very remarkable, and this is an occasion on which the country should be reminded of it), announced that his government was formed on four great principles—the extension of free trade, which has not been extended; the maintenance of peace, which has become a state of war; the principle of public education, to be secured by the production of a great legislative measure, which great legislative measure we have not had; but this we have received from Her Majesty's government—opposition to the only educational measure which has been introduced into the House; and lastly, and above all, a 'large' measure of parliamentary reform. When that large measure of parliamentary reform may be carried, I pretend not to foresee."

So much, he sneered, for the great principles on which the government of Lord Aberdeen had been founded, and so much for the four large measures that were to be introduced. The reform bill was the last to which the supporters of the government seemed to cling; and they had a right to believe that that was a promise which would be fulfilled, because representations were made to their followers not in slight and ordinary terms, and because expectations were held out to the country not of a trivial character. They were told now that wars and rumours of wars were the sufficient causes for the present government not fulfilling their positive and most important pledge. Yet at the time when war, and even invasion, was deemed to be instant and impending, this promise of reform was repeated, that pledge renewed, and members of the present cabinet even went to the hustings when appointed to office, and at the same time dilated on the terrors of invasion and the blessings of reform. Let them remember, also, that at the time when the present government was constructed, they were told that it was

framed on a principle of enormous personal sacrifice—that men descended to occupy posts inferior to their previous situations, and even inferior to their own opinion of their own talents. They were told then that there were extreme difficulties in bringing together a band of highly-gifted patriots, sacrificing all selfish considerations on the altar of their country—so that the chancellor of the exchequer, for example, and the president of public works (Sir William Molesworth) could meet together in council to consult for the welfare of their country. But a great principle did bring them together—parliamentary reform—so far as the chancellor of the exchequer was concerned, in a Conservative sense, and so far as the president of the board of works was concerned, in a form that would satisfy the disciples of Bentham and of Grote. That was the talisman that bound them all together; that the pervading influence which allowed elements, apparently so discordant, to work in harmony for the advantage of the country. But the spell seemed to have evaporated, though it was the only condition to which they were indebted for enjoying, at that moment, the administrative abilities of the first lord of the admiralty.\* At a time when they had two considerable fleets, when they had penetrated the mysteries of the Euxine and were about to break the ice of the Baltic, it was a satisfaction to recollect that, if Lord Aberdeen had not agreed to bring forward a large measure of parliamentary reform—not a wise measure, not a moderate measure, but a "large measure of parliamentary reform"—then, for aught they could see, the energy, the experience which distinguished the right hon. gentleman, the first lord of the admiralty, would not have been enlisted in the service of his sovereign and his country. "Sir," concluded Mr. Disraeli, "these considerations I offer for the consolation of parliamentary

\* Sir James Graham had joined the Coalition ministry on the condition that there should be "a large measure of parliamentary reform."

reformers. I fear they can hardly hope to have their measure, but there has been some magic in the name. Under that standard, at least, those have enlisted who, I have no doubt, will contribute to the greatness of the country and the glory of parliament. They, at least, have been led by that phrase to form a coalition government, and their supporters must be satisfied that, though the 'large measure' which they looked forward to with so much eagerness cannot be passed, still if the phrase had not been circulated, the ministers who have disappointed them would not now be sitting on those benches."

On the withdrawal of the measure the leader of the Opposition spoke at greater length. Lord John Russell, who addressed the House under strong emotion, said that the statement he was about to make might, in some minds, lay himself open to suspicion; but the government had come to the conclusion not to press the measure in the present state of the country. He had pledged his honour to bring forward the measure, and he had felt bound to act according to his engagements. He knew he would lay himself open to the sarcasms of Mr. Disraeli, but he trusted he would meet with support.

In criticising the course the government had pursued, Mr. Disraeli said he thought ministers had arrived at a sound conclusion in that which they had communicated to the House, and that the country was to be congratulated upon their decision. He was not, therefore, disposed to indulge in those sarcasms which the noble lord anticipated on that occasion; and if the conduct of the government with respect to other measures which he might also feel it to be his duty to oppose were influenced by the same feelings and regulated by the same policy, he could promise the noble lord that he would experience from him an opposition as mitigated as he would now. Although he should never shrink from expressing his best efforts to vindicate the opinions

of his friends, and to resist any measures which he thought obnoxious to the public welfare, if such measures were brought forward by the noble lord, he could assure him he was little disposed, after the address he had made, to view with any spirit of acerbity the course he had adopted. Although it had been his fate to be always seated opposite to the noble lord, he could say most sincerely, there was no one in that House who had a more heartfelt respect for the noble lord than he. He thought his character and career were precious possessions of the House of Commons, and he was sure that the members of the House of Commons would always cherish them. Wherever the noble lord sat, he was sure he would be accompanied by the respect of every member of that House; and he thought the manner in which what was evidently a painful communication had been made was in every way worthy of the noble lord's character.

"But," continued Mr. Disraeli, "although I am satisfied with the course which Her Majesty's ministers have proposed to take with respect to this bill for parliamentary reform, and although the feelings which I have endeavoured imperfectly to express with regard to the noble lord are sincere, I still feel it my duty to express my conviction that all that the noble lord has said to-night has not met the real difficulty of his position. All the influences which he has placed before us to-night, and which have induced him to take a course so opposite to that which he originally contemplated, have been in operation during the whole of the session; and, therefore, I am obliged to ask the noble lord how it was that, yielding now to these influences, the noble lord and his colleagues had previously resisted a bringing forward the bill for parliamentary reform at the commencement of the session."

"The noble lord has asked, 'to-night, a remedy of reform which have induced him to bring the bill forward. But, how was it that, when parliament met, the noble lord



not exist on the 13th of February, when the noble lord in detail, in spite of every warning, notwithstanding every remonstrance, determined to place that measure before parliament and the country? Why, on the very first night we assembled, the noble lord was met from this side of the House by appeals to him not to pursue the course he then contemplated. He was told that the state of war that then virtually existed was one that rendered the period most inopportune for the discussion of a proposal for organic changes in the constitution of the country. The noble lord would not listen to the appeals then made to him. The noble lord, with great ingenuity, maintained by instances and by arguments that a period of war was particularly qualified and adapted for the discussion of such business as this; that, the public mind being distracted from the measure of parliamentary reform, it was possible to devise a measure, without being so much influenced by popular feeling and popular passion as in ordinary circumstances they might be. The noble lord attempted to lay down the principle that the fact of being in a state of war was in favour of this change. The noble lord afterwards showed us that war with Russia was a condition of things peculiarly favourable to the prosecution of a measure of this kind.

"The noble lord has, to-night, observed that there is some force in the remark that there is inconvenience in laying a measure upon the table and not proceeding with it, which brands, I may say, almost a sixth of the members of the House of Commons. In a country like this, where so much depends upon prescription, the noble lord must feel that at any time for a minister of the crown to bring forward a measure that shakes the influence of prescription is a hazardous enterprise. It is certainly one that should not be risked, unless that minister has every prospect of succeeding with his measure, and of substituting for the power or influence which he is going

to destroy or to abrogate that new power or influence which, in his opinion, will more beneficially operate upon the government of the country. Now, what is parliamentary reform? We are in the habit of so familiarly using that phrase that we are almost too apt to forget its exact meaning. After all, a measure for the reconstruction of parliament is a measure to affect and to change the principal depository of power in the state. A measure of parliamentary reform is a measure which virtually says to a large class of the people, 'You do not possess political power—you ought to possess political power—and this is a measure to give you political power.' On the other hand, it says to another class, 'You possess political power—you ought not to possess political power—and we are going to take that political power you hold from you.' These are grave measures. A measure of that kind, if introduced merely by an independent member, may be looked on as a motion brought forward for discussion in a debating society, though the ability of the individual who introduced it, his knowledge of the subject, his depth of reasoning, and eloquence of language, may produce in the long run an amount of public opinion that may support and give influence to his views; but when a measure of parliamentary reform is brought forward by a minister of the great reputation of the noble lord, and when a man is told that he does not possess political power, and ought to possess it, and the measure of the government would give it to him, from that moment that man feels himself as a person aggrieved, as one deprived of his rights, so that you are absolutely producing a disaffected class by the proposition of the government. On the other hand, every man whose franchise is threatened by such a measure, every corporation, every individual who is told that the government are about to deprive him of power that he and those who preceded him have long exercised, though the government do not proceed with the measure, will look upon the government as their enemy



—as persons who, when they have the opportunity, would deprive them of their rights and franchises which they so much value. Therefore, it is clear that when a minister makes a proposition of this nature and does not proceed with it, he is creating disaffection amongst some classes and dislike amongst others. He is, in fact, weakening the constituted authorities of the country, and enfeebling the established institutions of the land. Such I think a most unwise course, and it only proves that no minister should embark in an undertaking of such a nature as parliamentary reform without the necessity for the change being clear, and his ability to accomplish his purpose being evident and palpable."

Mr. Disraeli then denied that the Conservatives had evinced any opposition to the measure, but that the indisposition to parliamentary reform in the present House of Commons was confined entirely to the noble lord's own side of the House.

"Now, I want to know," he continued, pressing his arguments home, "what were the circumstances under which the government of Lord Aberdeen made that pledge? What were the circumstances under which the right hon. baronet the first lord of the admiralty made the concession of a large measure of parliamentary reform a condition of his adhesion to the government of Lord Aberdeen? Were they circumstances of less peril than the present? Were they less serious? Was the conjuncture less menacing? Why, we really seem to have forgotten the circumstances under which Lord Aberdeen acceded to power. After an interval of between thirty and forty years, what had the House of Commons just done? They had armed the people; they had absolutely called out the militia, and were training and disciplining 100,000 men. A few months before Lord Aberdeen entered office, the late government had considerably increased the naval estimates; but no sooner had the first lord of the admiralty come into office than he doubled those estimates. Nor had the

present government been four months in office before they formed a project—which they subsequently executed—of having a military camp at Chobham. It was well known that the government then believed that, not merely war, but invasion was imminent.

"Now, no one will pretend that a war with France is not a much more awful affair than a war with Russia; and yet with a war with France in their opinion impending, they formed their government on the principle of a large measure of parliamentary reform. And did the adoption of that statement not serve them? Could they have formed their cabinet unless they had formed the principle upon which that cabinet was established? Could they have carried on their government for six months unless that had been the principle upon which the government of Lord Aberdeen had been established? Could they have possessed, not merely the great administrative abilities of the first lord of the admiralty, but the profound statesmanlike attributes even of the first commissioner of works? Could he have given to the government the fruits of those studies which Bentham had inspired and Grote had guided?

"How did they carry on the administration? Why, only a very few months after its formation we had the financial measures of the chancellor of the exchequer brought forward, which, according to the noble lord's statement to-night, was the excuse for not proceeding with parliamentary reform in the first year that the government held office. A tax extremely odious in the mode in which it is levied was introduced to this House, it being known that there was an absolute majority against the imposition of that tax, and that the most powerful assailants of this tax—the income tax—were to be found on the benches where the supporters of the present government mostly congregate. Did not these gentlemen say that they disapproved of the unmodified income tax, and only voted for it in con-



sequence of this promise of a large measure of parliamentary reform? And, therefore, I say that parliamentary reform was the principle upon which the government was founded, and without it the present cabinet would never have existed, and that without it the administration of affairs could not have been carried on. I say also at the same time, that the pledge to give a large measure of parliamentary reform was made at a time when the state of public affairs, so far as our external relations were concerned, was not less menacing, nay, I think, more perilous and threatening, than it is at the present time."

Opposed to the measure of Lord John Russell, Mr. Disraeli said he was glad that the government had relinquished it. But what was the moral they should draw from all these circumstances? Though no one could question the honour and sincerity of Lord John Russell—still he must say, remarked Mr. Disraeli, that there appeared to him that there had been too much levity, for party purposes, in dealing with questions of organic change in the constitution of the country. He hoped, therefore, that Lord John would not proceed in the course of which he had given an indication, of postponing for a short though indefinite time his plans of parliamentary reform. He thought it would be much better for the noble lord to allow the question altogether to drop, and not to embarrass himself by another pledge.

Instead of embarrassing himself, suggested Mr. Disraeli, by a promise to take as early an opportunity as possible to introduce the measure again, it would have been better for the noble lord to have said, "I have made a considerable attempt. The cabinet have stood by me. This measure is the result of our united deliberations. But the country does not require it, the times are perilous, and although I think that a time of war is no good cause why a measure of parliamentary reform should not be carried if

requisite, still it is not now absolutely necessary; it would involve a great struggle, and, therefore, for the present, I will say farewell to parliamentary reform." "Honourable gentlemen opposite," concluded Mr. Disraeli, "would then have had just as good a chance of getting parliamentary reform when the time arrived as they have now by retaining the vain pledges of a minister. Surely the experience of the last two years must have taught you, that you are not one whit the nearer a measure of parliamentary reform because you have the pledges of statesmen that they will give it to you. Here you have statesmen who have pledged themselves, and who were most sincerely anxious to fulfil their pledges, but you did not obtain your object. You never can obtain a change such as you desire until the great preponderance of public opinion demands it. Well, then, why embarrass the government with a standing pledge of this kind? The noble lord will pardon me for saying that it would have been more statesmanlike if, after all he has done, and I will say, after all he has suffered, he had asked the House to-night to place confidence in his sincerity, and to show by the manner in which they received his words to-night, that they thought his honour was intact; and had then told them that it was much better not to embarrass the government any longer with pledges on this subject, but that they might be confident that when the time was ripe, the measures that were demanded by necessity would be brought forward by any ministry which happened then to be in possession of power. I hope that the noble lord will at least draw this lesson from the past—not to embarrass himself with pledges, which he knows not when he can fulfil, merely for party purposes, and in order to animate followers who must feel that, after all, measures of national importance depend upon something more solid than the word of any individual, however sincere or however gifted."



## CHAPTER XII.

### "A COALITION WAR."

IN the present grave condition of affairs, when at any moment England might be called upon to engage herself in hostilities, the end of which no one could clearly see, it became the duty of the cabinet to make ample provision so that the naval and military resources of the country should be in full readiness for any emergency that might arise. Early in March the budget of the chancellor of the exchequer was laid before the House. Into the details of this financial statement we need not enter, beyond touching upon those proposals which served the purpose of Mr. Disraeli for delivering a scathing attack upon the vacillating and short-sighted conduct of the coalition administration. It was evident to all who had studied the diplomatic negotiations during the past few months, that ministers were divided into two parties upon the question of a war-like policy. Lord Aberdeen represented the section which placed faith in the honour of the Czar, and which did not feel itself called upon to uphold the Ottoman empire by the active interference of English arms. Lord Palmerston, on the other hand, represented the ministerial minority which declined to trust the aggressive policy of Russia, which believed in the loyalty and courage of the Turk, and which fully realized the danger to our Eastern possessions by the establishment of the Muscovite power on the shores of the Bosphorus. In the eyes of the leader of the Opposition, to this division of opinion the country was now indebted for her present position. Had England spoken at the outset of the complications between St. Petersburg and Constantinople in no uncertain voice; had the Czar been fully

assured that Lord Aberdeen would declare war rather than give any encouragement to Muscovite designs upon the Porte; had the coalition cabinet been firm, united, and straightforward—Russia would have withdrawn her pretensions, and the necessity for hostilities have been evaded. So thought Mr. Disraeli; and he did not hesitate to give utterance to his opinions.

In the supplemental budget brought forward by Mr. Gladstone, the total extra expenditure was estimated at nearly £7,000,000; this increase the chancellor proposed to meet by doubling the income tax, by adding to the excise duty on Scotch and Irish spirits, by a re-adjustment of the sugar duties, and increasing the malt tax. Exchequer bonds to the amount of £6,000,000 were also to be issued in three series, one for each of the three ensuing years. In criticising these proposals, Mr. Disraeli strongly condemned the financial policy of the past year, which, by reducing the rate of interest upon exchequer bills, and by the conversion of certain "patriarchal stocks," had exhausted the balances in the exchequer to such a degree, that the government had to depend upon deficiency bills for carrying on to a great extent the business of the country. Was that, he asked, a desirable state of things when they were on the eve, he would not say of disaster and distress, but of those contingencies which portended disaster and distress? When the last government quitted office, the balances in the exchequer amounted to nearly £9,000,000; and now, owing to the mistaken views of Mr. Gladstone, instead of enjoying any balance at all, they had an enormous deficiency. "The great balance



has disappeared," said Mr. Disraeli, "because the right hon. gentleman a year ago chose to take a course in monetary affairs which the circumstances of the times did not warrant, and which he followed in opposition to the best authorities who could possibly advise a man—even a man so gifted as the present chancellor of the exchequer." In spite of all warnings, in spite of the efflux of bullion, of falling funds, of over speculation, and, above all, of the agitated state of their relations with Russia, the finance minister had reduced the rate of interest on the unfunded debt; hence an exhausted exchequer and a terrible increase in their system of direct taxation. Such a state of things, argued Mr. Disraeli, must end inevitably in a loan. For the present political and financial condition of the country they had to thank the distractions of a divided cabinet—the one party drifting into war, the other carrying out schemes as if peace were fully assured. On every subject that came up ministers had been divided. They were divided upon the question of parliamentary reform, upon the subject of national education, upon the Protestant cause, and upon fifty other topics. Why, then, asked the speaker, did he not propose a vote of no confidence in the present administration? Such a proceeding would be a useless ceremony. It was unnecessary for him to propose any want of confidence in the present government, for the simple reason that it was apparent and proved to all that ministers had no confidence in each other.

"Let us," said Mr. Disraeli, in conclusion, and launching forth one of the frequent damaging criticisms which were to fall from his lips upon the inconsistencies and incompetence of the coalition cabinet—"Let us look a little to the conduct of these ministers. I shall treat them with fairness. I will not have recourse to little tests, but I will try them by great tests. I try them not upon petty points brought forward for the purpose of a party struggle,

but upon the broad grounds which, as Dr. Johnson said, a jury of people, picked out from the passers-by at Charing Cross, would adopt as tests whether the present government have confidence in themselves. I will take the greatest subject—I will take this question of peace or war. What confidence—what possible confidence—can we have in this cabinet who have involved us in this extraordinary position in which the country now finds itself? Is there a man among them who can tell us what we are going to war about? Is there a man among them who can tell us what at this moment is the object of their counsels? I will not quote a single person except themselves. Why, sir, there is the noble lord the secretary of state for the home department (Lord Palmerston), he has delivered his opinion upon this great subject of Turkish politics. He told us some few months ago, at the end of last session (and it really is almost the only speech we have had with any frankness or spirit upon the subject), he told us why we were going to war, and what we were going to war for. He said, 'We are going to war because we believe the independence and integrity of Turkey are assailed, and because we believe the interests of England are involved in maintaining the independence and integrity of Turkey. We mean by independence and integrity,' said the noble lord, 'we mean facts. It is our opinion that there is as much vitality in Turkey as there is in other countries that are our allies, competitors, or rivals.' The noble lord said more than that. He said, 'Not only do I believe Turkey independent, but I believe it absolutely progressive. Give it a fair trial and its maintenance is easy; and that maintenance is most important for the interests of England, the cause of freedom, and the civilization of the world.' He went on to speak of the high impulses which should induce us to support at this moment the independence and integrity of Turkey. And loud cheers followed the speech of the noble lord.



"Well, what happened a short time after that? There was a right hon. gentleman (Mr. Gladstone) whose conduct I have had occasion to criticise this evening, and whom I little thought when I first rose I should have to notice with regard to another subject; he went about the country and paid a visit to a great commercial community, the city of Manchester, at a time when there was great depression in the country, owing to the state of affairs in Turkey, and when men of resolute minds began to think that that was occurring which might prove fatal to the supremacy of the country, and be most prejudicial to the cause of justice, of truth, and of freedom. What did the right honourable gentleman say on this occasion? Did he agree with the secretary of state? Not at all. He said, 'Things look very bad; but what can you expect? You must prepare yourselves for the worst. The independence and integrity of Turkey which people talk about are not facts—they are phantasies or phantoms. You must not confound the independence and integrity of Turkey with the independence and integrity of other European states.' In fact the right hon. gentleman quibbled completely away the independence and integrity of Turkey, and, in short, seemed to be paving the way for that scheme of partition we have recently heard of. This was the course of proceeding adopted by the minister of finance, who is now going to double the income tax in order to support the independence and integrity of Turkey. I am challenged to propose a vote of no confidence in the government. Why, sir, the noble secretary of state in the other house of parliament (Lord Clarendon) told us the other night what we were going to fight for, and I was grateful to a member of Her Majesty's government for being frank. He said, 'We are going to fight for the rights of the Christian subjects of the Porte. That is our cause. We are resolved, and we shall stipulate that there shall be equality of rights and privileges between the Chris-

tian subjects and all other subjects of the Porte.' I believe loud cheers followed that speech also.

"What happened the next day? The noble lord the secretary of state in this House (Lord Palmerston), who is supposed to have some knowledge of our foreign policy, said, in the most distinct way, and in tones that he knew would re-echo through all Europe, that he did not imagine for a moment that any man would entertain the idea of our obtaining equal privileges for the Christian subjects of the Sultan—that to insist upon such a thing would be acting as badly as the emperor of Russia himself—and that, if we obtained an equality of privileges between the different subjects of the Sultan, we should put an end to the Turkish empire. And yet, whilst those gentlemen have no confidence in their mutual opinions, I am to be taunted and told it is my duty to propose that the House of Commons shall so stultify itself that we are absolutely to vote that we have no confidence in them! But is that all? The noble lord the leader of this House (Lord John Russell) likewise described the war in which we are going to embark. He described the war as a holy war, as a just war, a war for justice, for truth, and for public freedom—and in a manner which I admired, in a most solemn and fitting manner, invoked the name of the Most High upon that war. What happened the next night in another place? Why, the leader of the other house of parliament told us that he thought that war was not yet inevitable, and that in his opinion the war was accursed.

"Sir, if the war in which we are about to engage be a war of justice and truth, and if it be undertaken in support of the liberties of Europe—if it be a war undertaken to check the progress of a colossal despotism and to advance the march of civilization, it is not an accursed war. But if the war be not undertaken for these objects, then the noble lord was not justified in counselling his sovereign to embark in it. Such is your position upon the Turkish question—upon



a question which we are told confidentially alone keeps you together as a ministry. I would like to know how the war is to be carried on with efficiency and success by men who have not settled what the object of the war is. The war has been brought about by two opposite opinions in the cabinet. Those conflicting opinions have led to all the vacillation, all the perplexity, all the fitfulness, all the timidity, and all the occasional violence to which this question has given rise; and I must say, that if the noble lord the leader of this House—I speak my solemn conviction—had remained prime minister of this country, or if the noble lord the secretary of state for the home department had been minister of this country—or if Lord Derby had continued minister of this country—hay, if Lord Aberdeen—I wish to state the case fairly—had been minister of this country, with a sympathizing cabinet, there would have been no war. It is a coalition war. Rival opinions, contrary politics, and discordant systems have produced that vacillation and perplexity, that at last you are going to war with an opponent who does not want to fight, and whom you are unwilling to encounter. What a mess for a great country! and all brought about by such distinguished administrative ability! What is a question about the interest on exchequer bills compared to that! The financial *faux pas* and little escapades of the chancellor of the exchequer would soon have been forgotten, and even forgiven; for after all, what is the failure of his conversion scheme compared to this duplication of the income tax and to this terrible prospect of war, brought about by the combination of geniuses opposite me—and brought about absolutely by the amount of their talents and the discordancy of their opinions? And then they say, if we criticise their policy we are bound immediately to come forward and propose a vote of no confidence in them. I tell them again I will not propose a vote of no confidence in men who prove to me every

hour that they have no confidence in each other." This speech was delivered March 21, 1854.

A few days after this condemnation of the shuffling course pursued by the government, the veiled hostilities which had been some weeks in existence ceased, and war between the allied powers and Russia was openly declared. Late in the month of February, England had despatched an ultimatum to Russia. In this document it was frankly stated by Lord Clarendon to Count Nesselrode, that the British government had exhausted all the efforts of negotiations, and was compelled to announce that "if Russia should decline to restrict within purely diplomatic limits the discussion in which she has for some time past been engaged with the Sublime Porte, and does not by return of the messenger who is the bearer of my present letter, announce her intention of causing the Russian troops under Prince Gortschakoff to commence their march with a view to recross the Pruth, so that the provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia shall be completely evacuated on April 30 next, the British government must consider the refusal or the silence of the cabinet of St. Petersburg as equivalent to a declaration of war, and will take its measures accordingly." To this despatch "the Czar did not judge it suitable to give an answer." The Baltic fleet was reviewed at Spithead by the queen amid the wildest enthusiasm; a treaty of alliance was signed at Constantinople between Great Britain, France, and Turkey; and war was declared against Russia, March 27, 1854. The causes of the declaration of war were made known through an official statement published in the *London Gazette*.

"This document," writes a recent historian, "is an interesting and a valuable state paper. It recites with clearness and deliberation the successive steps by which the allied powers had been led to the necessity of an armed intervention in the controversy between Turkey and Russia. It



described, in the first place, the complaint of the emperor of Russia against the Sultan with reference to the claims of the Greek and Latin churches, and the arrangement promoted satisfactorily by Her Majesty's ambassador at Constantinople for rendering justice to the claim, 'an arrangement to which no exception was taken by the Russian government.' Then came the sudden unmasking of the other and quite different claims of Prince Mentschikoff, 'the nature of which in the first instance he endeavoured, as far as possible, to conceal from Her Majesty's ambassador.' These claims, 'thus studiously concealed,' affected not merely, or at all, the privileges of the Greek church at Jerusalem, 'but the position of many millions of Turkish subjects in their relations to their sovereign the Sultan.' The declaration recalled the various attempts that were made by the queen's government in conjunction with the governments of France, Austria, and Prussia, to meet any just demands of the Russian emperor without affecting the dignity and independence of the Sultan, and showed that if the object of Russia had been solely to secure their proper privileges and immunities for the Christian populations of the Ottoman empire, the offers that were made could not have failed to meet that object. Her Majesty's government, therefore, held it as manifest that what Russia was really seeking was, not the happiness of the Christian communities of Turkey, but the right to interfere in the ordinary relations between Turkish subjects and their sovereign. The Sultan refused to consent to this, and declared war in self-defence. Yet the government of Her Majesty did not renounce all hope of restoring peace between the contending parties until advice and remonstrance proving wholly in vain, and Russia continuing to extend her military preparations, Her Majesty felt called upon, 'by regard for an ally, the integrity and independence of whose empire have been recognized as essential to the peace of Europe; by the sympathies of her people

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with right against wrong; by a desire to avert from her dominions most injurious consequences, and to save Europe from the preponderance of a power which has violated the faith of treaties and defies the opinion of the civilized world, to take up arms in conjunction with the emperor of the French for the defence of the Sultan.'"

A royal message announced to both houses of parliament the rupture with Russia. "Her Majesty thinks it proper," declared the formal document read by the lord chancellor, "to acquaint the House that the negotiations in which Her Majesty, in concert with her allies, has for some time past been engaged with His Majesty the emperor of All the Russias, have terminated, and that Her Majesty feels bound to afford active assistance to her ally the Sultan against unprovoked aggression.

"Her Majesty has given directions for laying before the House copies of such papers, in addition to those already communicated to parliament, as will afford the fullest information with regard to the subject of these negotiations. It is a consolation to Her Majesty to reflect that no endeavours have been wanting on her part to preserve to her subjects the blessings of peace.

"Her Majesty's just expectations have been disappointed; and Her Majesty relies with confidence on the zeal and devotion of the House of Lords, and on the exertions of her brave and loyal subjects, to support her in her determination to employ the power and resources of the nation for protecting the dominions of the Sultan against the encroachments of Russia."

A grave debate ensued in both Houses when the message was taken into consideration, and Mr. Disraeli again expressed his opinion (March 31, 1854) as to the causes which had led to the Crimean war. He recapitulated several of his former arguments; but having carefully studied the recent papers placed before the House, he was enabled to shed a new light upon the question. He began by alluding to



the constitutional aspect of the message. The power of declaring war was the prerogative of the Crown. He looked upon it as a real prerogative; and if Her Majesty sent a message to parliament, and informed the Houses that the Crown had found it necessary to engage in war, he contended that such a decision was not an occasion when they were to enter into the policy or impolicy of the advice by which the queen had been guided. It was their duty, under such circumstances, to rally round the throne, and to take subsequent and constitutional occasions to question the policy of ministers if it were not a proper one. He vindicated the right of the Opposition, in spite of statements to the contrary from the Treasury bench, not only to support the government when duty commanded such support, but also to question at the same time the prudence of the counsels which had rendered it necessary that all parties in the nation should surround the Crown with their unanimous aid. That state of things had arisen before. Mr. Canning had once been taunted in the same spirit as the Conservatives were now taunted, because they supported a government carrying on a war, of which government they at the same time disapproved. How did Mr. Canning meet the charge? In reply to Mr. Sheridan, he said, "Mr. Sheridan has stated it as a matter of grave imputation against those who, like myself, are ready to vote for every measure of defence and preparation that the minister may think proper to propose, that while we concur in such measures, we do not withhold expressions of distrust and disapprobation of the general conduct and system of the policy of those who propose them. It is urged as if there were something uncandid in not giving confidence to a government at the moment the subject of debate is one on which you agree. Now, sir, I am, on the contrary, of opinion that it would be much more uncandid and unfair to conceal our general sentiments at the moment of our expressing our approbation." Such a state-

ment, added Mr. Disraeli, was a complete vindication, and the best authority for the course the Conservatives had thought proper to adopt on the present occasion. It was their duty to support the throne in vindicating the honour of the country, and in defending the best interests of the empire.

Mr. Disraeli then drew the attention of the House to a document which had been almost entirely ignored by parliament and the press. There had always, he said, existed two theories as to the "Eastern Question," each maintained by statesmen of eminence. The one asserted that there was vitality in Turkey: that she was a country full of resources; and that she was not only qualified for independence, but absolutely capable of progress. "Statesmen of this school," said Mr. Disraeli, "upholding these views, have been of opinion that with wisdom and with firmness Turkey might form a substantial and a real barrier against Russia. Then there is the other school, which believes that there is no vitality in Turkey; that it is decaying and decrepit; that its resources always imperfectly developed, perhaps are now virtually exhausted; and that it is totally impossible that it can long exist as an independent or *quasi*-independent community—and these statesmen, not wishing to hand over this rich prey to its powerful neighbour, have been of opinion that by encouraging the Christian subjects of the Sultan, and by advancing the civilization and increasing the rights of those classes, you might in time prepare a population for Turkey which would prevent that intermediate state of anarchy which otherwise would happen between the fall of a great empire and the rise of a new power."

It was evident, continued the leader of the Opposition, to which school the present chief of the cabinet belonged. In the summer of 1844, when the Czar Nicholas was on a visit to these shores, a memorandum had been drawn up, which was virtually an agreement between Count Nesselrode and Lord Aberdeen, who was then foreign secretary under Sir Robert Peel. In that

memorandum it was proposed to divide Turkey through the agency of Great Britain, Russia, and Austria. France was expressly excluded from that agreement. It was also stipulated that the rights of the Christian subjects of the Porte should be vindicated. And now one of the parties to that agreement occupied the position of prime minister of England! No wonder that the Czar rejoiced to hear of the elevation of Lord Aberdeen, that His Majesty did not believe England would go to war to help the Sultan, and that Russia placed no faith in the alliance with France! No wonder that there were divisions in the cabinet! He did not, proceeded Mr. Disraeli, accuse Russia of immorality in wishing to extend her territories. What nation could throw the stone at her? France had extended her territories by seizing one of the most considerable of the principalities of Turkey, the fair province of Algiers. Could England come into court with clean hands, with her Indian wars, and her recent proceedings in Burmah? And had not the United States only lately absorbed Texas? He made no charges against Russia in that respect. "We oppose the policy of Russia," cried Mr. Disraeli, "because if she succeeds in getting possession of Constantinople, we believe she will exercise such a preponderating influence in European politics as would be fatal to the civilization of Europe, and injurious to the best interests of England."

Yet the hostilities they were about to plunge into might easily have been avoided. Little blame was to be attributed to the Czar for the course he had pursued. Thanks to the Nesselrode memorandum, Russia regarded the present leader of the government as her tool and ally. From recent utterances of certain members of the cabinet, which cast grave reflections upon the position of the emperor of the French, she had been led not to believe in the reality of the union between England and France. Lord John Russell had himself stated to the Czar, in an official despatch,

that it had been prescribed "as a duty, as well as sanctioned by treaty," that the autocrat of All the Russias should guard over the interests of the several millions of Christians in the Ottoman empire. Yet, now the only object England had in going to war was to protect the Christian subjects of the Sultan of Turkey against Muscovite interference! And where pray, asked the Conservative leader, did Lord John discover that wonderful document which prescribed "as a duty," and sanctioned "by treaty," the right of the Czar to meddle with the internal affairs of the Ottoman empire? "Now, if the noble lord," laughed Mr. Disraeli, "will place upon the table a schedule of the treaties which prescribe it as a duty to the emperor, and sanction it as a right that he should protect the Christian subjects of the grand seigneur, I think that would be one of the most instructive diplomatic documents that could possibly now be offered for our consideration." There was no such treaty. There was no plea whatever for the emperor to assume that protection.

Mr. Disraeli then concluded by sketching the course the government should have pursued, and condemned in no measured terms the policy of Lord Aberdeen.

"I ask," he sternly inquired, "what is the course the government ought to have adopted when they found so undisguisedly what was the purpose of Russia, and what was the secret agreement which Russia deemed probable of fulfilment? Mark one important fact. The emperor of Russia, when he came to this country in 1844 personally to enter into this secret agreement, based the whole of his future operations upon an estrangement between England and France—the partition was to take place without the interference or interposition of France. Now, in 1844 there was a cordial understanding between England and France, generally throughout the government of the noble lord (Lord John Russell), and entirely through the government of Lord Derby. But was there a cordial understanding

between England and France when Lord Aberdeen acceded to power? Had the emperor of Russia any reason to believe that there was any change in the feelings of this country towards France? A storm of invective was raised against the emperor of the French by the colleagues of the noble earl. No wonder the emperor of Russia was in such extreme haste. No wonder he was so sanguine and so precipitate. No wonder he sent to Sir Hamilton Seymour\* immediately there was at the head of the government of this country the individual who had agreed to the ultimate dismemberment of Turkey, who had agreed before the partition that Russia should indirectly govern Turkey, and who was surrounded apparently by colleagues preventing a good understanding with France as much as possible. And then we are told by one of the ministers that the emperor made a mistake, in supposing there was any change of feeling between the two countries. Why, was there not a change of feeling between the two countries? Is it not a fact that there was a considerable change, and have we not since found there was a most fatal alteration in the feelings of the two countries? No one can at this moment calculate the evil, the injury, which the conduct of the colleagues of Lord Aberdeen and himself occasioned with reference to that point?

"Well then, I say, what ought the government to have done when these communications were made? Suppose you had said, as the emperor of Russia said with regard to Prince Mentschikoff's mission, 'We are not to be trifled with. This is no trifling matter. We know the plans have been long matured, devised with great judgment, and ripened with great vigilance. We know the emperor of Russia is not acting from mere caprice, but upon a supposed agreement with this country, of ten years old. He is counting upon an estrangement between England and France; for in conversation with Sir Hamilton

\* The English ambassador at St. Petersburg.

Seymour, he reverts to the point that this is to be carried into effect without the interference or interposition of France. We must lose no time in letting the emperor of Russia know that he is labouring under most serious and awful misconception. We must tell him great changes have taken place since 1844—that no cabinet is bound by what can be considered only as an agreement between gentlemen; and however favourably that may have been received at the moment, great changes have since occurred in the position of Turkey, in the progressive improvement of Turkey, and in the opinions of the people of this country with respect to Turkey. We must tell him it is totally impossible to sanction these plans and prospects of his; that we look upon Turkey as capable of forming an independent barrier to any aggressive power; and though we are anxious to maintain with him a cordial friendship, he must dismiss from his mind for ever those plots and plans which he has nursed with so much sedulousness and so much secrecy.' Was anything of this kind said?" asked the leader of the Opposition. "Ought not the government to have said more? 'Sire, we find you are labouring under a great mistake; you are misconceiving the relations which subsist between England and France. The relations are not dynastic relations. They do not depend in any degree upon the families who occupy thrones; they have been formed by the development of the material interests of the two countries, and the intimate alliance which those interests suggest. We cannot consent to the partition of Turkey. That is out of the question; but if it were absolutely necessary and inevitable to consider the state of that power, the first counsellor we should call in would be France. You are labouring under a great mistake, and you must relieve your mind from all this mis-intelligence.' And do you believe," continued Mr. Disraeli, "that if the emperor of Russia, a prince of great sagacity, shrewdness, and ability, had been met in that way—if you had told him that



partition was out of the question; that Turkey was not only to be maintained, but to be permitted to enter into the community of European nations; that France was the cordial friend of England, as you wished Russia also to be—do you believe that we should be at this moment discussing this question, or even in the possession of this painful ‘secret and confidential’ correspondence? No, sir, the war has been produced by one man. It has been produced by that individual who occupies the most eminent post in this country. And certain I am that as time elapses, and not ere long, that will be the general conviction of all England.”

We now for a moment turn from the minarets of Constantinople to the spires of Oxford. Early in March Lord John Russell had introduced a measure “to make further provision for the good government and extension of the University of Oxford and the colleges therein.” Of late years the question of university reform had been attracting considerable attention among those interested in the education of the youth of the country. It was complained that the University of Oxford did not at present fulfil the purposes for which it was established, and that some alteration both as to its government and to its system of tuition was absolutely necessary. Then the grievances were catalogued and commented upon. The heads of houses, it was said, were elected for other purposes than to conduct the details of education, and therefore were not specially qualified to undertake the superintendence of the studies of the young men intrusted to their care. Again, it was proposed that the advantages of the college tutorial system and the professorial system should be united, so that the student, in addition to the college tuition, might enjoy the opportunity of acquiring a knowledge of modern science and literature and of modern languages, which would be very beneficial to him in after life. The restrictions as to scholarships and fellowships, it was suggested, ought also to be

abolished, and the revenues of the wealthier colleges, which were now not applied to the object of learning or teaching, should be devoted to that purpose. To remove these grievances, Lord John Russell brought in his bill of University Reform, which was at first favourably received. It proposed to change the hebdomadal board into a council, and to alter considerably the constitution of its staff. The preference given by testators to founders’ kin and to certain counties was to be done away with, and fellowships were to be held only for one year, unless the holder was engaged in the university in tuition or discipline. A commission was to be appointed to deal with the revenues of colleges, so as to increase the funds for the promotion of education. The question of tests was also to be considered.

Such were the chief objects of this measure, which led to an animated discussion (April 27, 1854) when the bill came into committee. Various members addressed the House, some insisting that as an ancient corporation the freedom of action of the university ought not to be interfered with, whilst others, on the contrary, maintained that the reforms when carried out would help to create a class of learned tutors, would cause the lectures of professors to be well attended, and would be very instrumental in the promotion of learning and religion. Mr. Disraeli spoke with his usual sound common sense upon the meditated alterations, at the same time evincing that strong dislike which always characterized him of anything that interfered with the freedom of the English people. He objected to the bill, not because it attempted to reform and reconstruct an ancient institution of the country, but because it struck a fatal blow at the independence and self-government of the university. If the measure became law it was not the province of the House of Commons to deal with the details discussed by Lord John Russell—those might safely be left to the consideration of the



new controlling body of the university. "Then," said Mr. Disraeli, "if the university ever effects changes—if it deals with the question of increased accommodation for students—if it deals with the question which system of education should be most encouraged by the university—if it deals even with the appropriation of college property—it will be from its own action, with entire independence, with entire freedom, with entire self-government, which, in my opinion, it is of the utmost importance for us to encourage in those great seats of learning whose fortunes are now under our consideration."

Still, even if the bill passed, Mr. Disraeli doubted whether it would accomplish that great change in the system of Oxford which had been so much talked of. One of its objects was to establish a class of distinguished professors; but a professor was not a man that could suddenly be created, even if parliament increased his income to a considerable extent. A comparison had been instituted between the professorial system in English universities and that in the universities of Germany. Yet, between the two systems it was impossible to establish a comparison. "What sphere," asked Mr. Disraeli, "is there for the genius, the intellect, the talent, and the energy of Germany, but in the professorial chair? Give Germany a House of Commons,\* and do you think that she would then produce those men of profound erudition, of commanding eloquence—men who can bury themselves in speculative abstractions, and produce those results of erudition which we are told shake the world? The fact is, that in Germany, with a gifted population double the extent of ours, there is no avenue for any man by which he can make the world conscious of his powers, except by the chair of the professor. In this country you may increase the salaries as much as you please, but to

suppose that you can produce a class of men like the German professors is chimerical. . . . We are a nation of action, and you may depend upon it that, however you may increase the rewards of professors—though you may give them £2000 instead of £200—ambition in England will look to public life: men will look to the House of Commons, and not to professors' chairs in the universities. I believe, therefore, that this is another great point in which you will not find any material change effected by what you contemplate with regard to this resolution—this great revival of the professorial system. You will not be able, however you think you may, to lay your hand upon twenty-five or thirty professors suddenly, capable of effecting a great influence on the youth of England. You cannot get these men all at once; it will be slowly, by degrees, with great difficulty, by fostering and cultivating your resources, that you will be able to produce one of these great professors—a man able to influence the public opinion of the university. Whether, then, you look to the great change which you propose with respect to these private halls, which is, in fact, a revolution of the collegiate system; or whether you look to the great alteration you contemplate by the revival of the professorial instead of the tutorial system—on both points you will meet, I think, with disappointment."

Mr. Disraeli further objected to that morbid desire on the part of the legislature to effect changes in the institutions of the country. He specified the legislature, because he did not see that desire for change and innovation on the part of the people. During the last twenty years the legislature had made an assault on the estates of the church, it had introduced the wildest and rawest schemes for the reconstruction of parliament, and now it laid its unhallowed hand on the ark of the universities: yet these morbid attacks had neither been wished for nor supported by the people. And what was the plea urged for these onslaughts?

\* Germany has now a House of Commons, and among its most prominent members are the men who formerly filled chairs in her universities.

"The plea is," answered Mr. Disraeli, and in his reply we see the soundness and judicious toleration upon which his Conservatism was based, "that there are anomalies and imperfections that ought to be removed; the fallacy is, that in removing these anomalies and imperfections, we never calculate and we never consider that much greater injury is done to a country like the present by outraging the principle of prescription, upon which our institutions depend, than by removing a few anomalies and imperfections." England was ruled by traditional influences. Without traditional influences they might have a stronger government, but they would have a weaker people. "And, sir," continued Mr. Disraeli, "among these traditional influences the influence of the universities of the country has not been the least considerable. Its direct action has been great; its indirect action has been greater. If I were asked, 'Would you have Oxford with its self-government, freedom, and independence, but yet with its anomalies and imperfections, or would you have the university free from those anomalies and imperfections and under the control of the government?' I would say, 'Give me Oxford free and independent, with its anomalies and imperfections.' Accord authority to the universities if they wished it, by which they might increase their powers and possess an enlarged sphere of action; but place the universities under the control of the state, and one of those influences which in the aggregate formed one of the elements by which they governed the country would be destroyed." In spite, however, of the opposition it encountered, the bill, though with many of its most obnoxious clauses suppressed in committee, was entered upon the statute-book towards the end of the session.\*

To return, after this brief interruption,

\* By this Act, conjointly with the University Tests Act of 1871, the universities and colleges, with all the offices belonging to them, excepting a very few, were thrown open to all persons, irrespective of religious belief; the government of the universities was transferred to a new body

to the coalition war. As all naval and military preparations were being actively carried out, it became necessary for the chancellor of the exchequer to make demands upon the House of Commons, so that the Treasury should be supplied with the resources necessary for the present emergency. Though Mr. Disraeli had given in his adhesion to the warlike policy of the cabinet, still he did not feel bound to vote for every additional tax that ministers imposed. Consequently there was more than one smart passage of arms during this session between the leader of the Opposition and Mr. Gladstone, whose "sanctimonious rhetoric" was freely indulged in at this period. Mr. Disraeli warmly objected to the increased malt tax, since it pressed not only with great severity upon the land, but was, in his opinion, a most cruel return for the patriotism displayed by the cultivators of the soil. "Though I am willing," he said (May 15, 1854), "to give credit to every class in the country for being ready at this moment to do their duty to their sovereign, yet I ask, without fear of contradiction, is it not the fact, from the nature of circumstances, from the character of the constitution, and from other causes, that you have been obliged particularly to appeal to the patriotism, to the resources, to the exertions, and to the energy of the landed interest of the country? We heard a good deal of declamation some time back against the territorial constitution of the country. I ask any gentleman in what country could you have found those means of defence which you have found in England under the influence and by the immediate aid of the territorial classes of this country? Having raised and armed such a militia, I want to know in what country of Europe, excepting England, you could have found leaders to whom to intrust such a force. You are at every moment, during which

elected by resident graduates; and steps were taken, which have not yet been completed, to apply in the most beneficial directions, for the promotion of popular education of the highest class, the revenues of the universities and colleges.

you are advancing in this struggle, more and more obliged to appeal—this is a necessity from which you cannot escape—to the classes connected with the land, and which are at this moment the surest source of safety and security to England. Whether it be the recruit whom you induced to quit his home, or the cultivator of the soil, whose industry you are obliged to disturb, or the proprietor of the soil—these are the classes to whose exertions, sacrifices, and energy you appeal for organizing the country? Yet you have so managed your finances that the only odious tax which you have put forward is a tax which more or less, and in my opinion in a great degree, does press upon the industry of the soil, which does interfere with the employment of the capital of the cultivators of the soil, and embarrasses, prevents, and restricts the industry on whose resources you mainly rely." Such an imposition, he declared, was as churlish as it was impolitic.

Nor was the leader of the Opposition less sparing of his barbed strictures when dealing with Mr. Gladstone's request to be empowered to issue £2,000,000 of exchequer bonds. Mr. Disraeli considered that demand as the result of the financial errors of the chancellor of the exchequer during the last year. Mr. Gladstone's administration of the national money, he asserted, had been one tissue of mistakes. First, he had dealt incautiously with the exchequer bills; then there had been the unhappy scheme of conversion which bound the country to a stipulated rate for forty years, coupled with the attempt to reduce the national debt on the eve of war; thirdly, he had proposed a peace budget on the eve of war—a peace budget promising repeal of taxes, and securing the assent to the re-enactment of the income tax on the pledge that it should terminate at a fixed time; and then there was the reduction of interest which had forced him to pay for £3,000,000 of exchequer bills. Yet, with war staring him in the face, and with an empty exchequer to cheer him on, Mr. Gladstone was

charmingly self-satisfied, and even had the audacity to sneer at Mr. Pitt for shortsightedness—Mr. Gladstone, who converted stocks and could not foresee the results—Mr. Gladstone, who had one budget in March and another in May, actually sneered at Mr. Pitt as shortsighted! "But if the right hon. gentleman will allow me," said Mr. Disraeli in his most caustic manner, "I trust without offending either himself or his friends, I would presume to give him a piece of advice: I would give over these unworthy sneers levelled at the reputation of a great minister. I would, if I were the right honourable gentleman, confine myself in future to self-glorification, an art of which I admit that the right honourable gentleman is a great master. Let him dilate upon the astuteness with which he effects the conversion of South Sea annuities; let him dwell upon the intrepid courage with which, to show his spite against the party he has quitted, he can double the malt tax; but let him cease from these reflections upon the memory of a statesman who, I can assure him, is still dear to the people of England. Let him remember that Mr. Pitt, whatever may have been his failings, held with a steady hand the helm, when every country but Great Britain was submerged in the storm; and when he taunts Mr. Pitt with courting bankers and money-lenders, he might also remember that that minister owed to a grateful country an eleemosynary tomb."

So vigilant and incisive a critic upon the financial blunders and the tortuous foreign policy of the government, as Mr. Disraeli had now established himself, was not likely to escape abuse when his own shortcomings came up for discussion. It was believed that an opportunity now offered to taunt the leader of the Opposition with inconsistency as to his conduct upon a subject which he had always maintained was specially dear to him. To the malice of his enemies outside the walls of St. Stephen, it was not the custom of Mr. Disraeli to pay the slightest attention.



Venomous and mendacious articles as to his works and speeches were constantly inserted in newspapers and magazines; he never replied to them, he never condescended to contradict them, it is doubtful whether he even troubled himself to read them. Itinerant orators and lecturers, on the spiteful stump, ranted and brayed against him and his policy; yet their asinine echoes, when they even reached his ears, made not the faintest impression upon his mind. He knew so well what it all signified. Statesmen can seldom judge human nature kindly when they so frequently have to observe it either vindictive or suppliant, according as promise or refusal attends upon its importunities. Mr. Disraeli knew that he had but to grant a pension from the civil list, or to nominate to some inspectorship, or to fill up a vacant living, and he could buy the silence of some of his bitterest foes; by such bribery the men who then abused him to the lowest depths of disparagement would have changed their note and extolled him to the skies as the possessor of every tombstone virtue. Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass? asks Job. Such abuse and such adulation were rightly considered by Mr. Disraeli as beneath notice and beneath contempt.

Of his reputation in parliament Mr. Disraeli, however, was keenly sensitive. He owed everything to the House of Commons; the House of Commons was, as he said, the jury of his life, and he never permitted any charge against himself to be brought before its members without at once rising to meet it. The accusation he had now to encounter was on the occasion of the parliamentary oaths bill. Early in February Lord John Russell had introduced a measure respecting parliamentary oaths. He begged the House to consider generally the oaths of allegiance, supremacy, and abjuration, and the oath taken by papists, with a view to substituting an oath of a simpler and more intelligible kind. As to the oath of allegiance, he

said there was no objection; but the other oaths of supremacy and abjuration were not in the same category. They had been framed to meet certain dangers which existed no longer, and were now unnecessary. Lord John then read his own oath,\* which removed the specific declarations required from all papists, and at the same time did away with those words which had been so fatal to the admission of the Jews, "on the true faith of a Christian." When the bill came on for second reading (May 25, 1854) it met with strong opposition. It was, it was said, an insidious attack upon the established church; it omitted all recognition of the supremacy of the queen; it would weaken the Protestant religion; nay, it would destroy the Christian character of the House of Commons. The measure, cried the Opposition, was an underhand contrivance to favour the Roman Catholics, and to allow the Jews to sneak into parliament.

Mr. Disraeli made a guarded and weighty speech on the occasion. In the bill before them they had, he said, to consider three issues which were in themselves of a different nature. By the omission of certain words at the end of one oath a Jew might be admitted into parliament; by the alteration of another oath the views of the Romanising Protestants were to be advanced; whilst by the change and reconstruction of a third oath the objects of the Roman Catholics them-

\* This was the oath:—"I, A. B., do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, and will defend her to the utmost of my power against all conspiracies and attempts whatever which shall be made against her person, crown, or dignity; and I will do my utmost endeavour to disclose and make known to Her Majesty, her heirs and successors, all treasons or traitorous conspiracies which may be formed against her or them; and I do faithfully promise to maintain, support, and defend, to the utmost of my power, the succession of the crown, which succession by an act intituled 'An act for the further limitation of the crown, and better securing the rights and liberties of the subject,' is and stands limited to the Princess Sophia, Electress of Hanover, and the heirs of her body being Protestants, hereby utterly renouncing and abjuring any obedience or allegiance unto any other person claiming or pretending a right to the crown of this realm; and I do declare that no foreign prince, prelate, person, state, or potentate, hath or ought to have any temporal or civil jurisdiction, power, superiority or pre-eminence directly or indirectly within this realm. So help me God."



selves were to be promoted. "The noble lord," proceeded Mr. Disraeli, "has been taunted in the course of this debate with having undertaken the Jewish claims in consequence of an accidental political connection.\* Such a taunt I am sure the noble lord will not hear from me. I know well that the noble lord has, during a long and eminent career, consistently connected his name with the advocacy of the principle of religious liberty, and it was, I am sure, in defence of that principle that he felt it his duty to become the advocate of the Jewish claims to political emancipation. I have myself on many occasions supported—at least by my vote—the noble lord in these efforts; though on the only occasion on which I ever presumed to offer my opinions to the House, I claimed for myself another ground for the course which I took, and another reason for sympathy in the object which both the noble lord and myself wished to attain. I respect the principle of religious liberty, as every gentleman, no doubt, with more or less qualification does who sits in this House; but I cannot say that it was on the ground of the principle of religious liberty that, in obedience to an overwhelming conviction, I felt it my duty to advocate the political emancipation of those of Her Majesty's subjects who prefer the Jewish religion."

Then Mr. Disraeli repeated the arguments he had on a former occasion urged. The human family in general were under the greatest obligations to the Jews; it was because the House of Commons was a Christian assembly that the claim of the Jews to enjoy all civil and political privileges was irresistible; had not the Bible been translated and printed, there would now have been no House of Commons; it was to "the sword of the Lord

and of Gideon" that the liberties of England were indebted; and, as a question of policy, it was wise for England to emancipate the Jews: for no country which had persecuted the Hebrew race had prospered. Nor did he despair, continued Mr. Disraeli, of this question of emancipation. Within the last few years great strides had been made in the movement. The Jewish claims had been received with much more favour than were those of the Roman Catholics. No one could pretend that the present position of the Jews in England was for a moment to be compared with what it was twenty, or even ten years ago. They were infinitely more considered, and the prejudices of which they were the victims had rapidly and considerably diminished. "I think," said he, "that it is no exaggeration to say that there never was a body of men who have been subjected to prejudices and political disqualifications who have in so short a time inclined public opinion to their favour, or made such considerable advances towards the ultimate object which they wished to obtain. Taking—and taking naturally—a deep interest in this question, I have ever felt confident that the course of time and of discussion, and the humanizing influences of literary research and public debate, would bring opinion about in favour of the English Jews, remembering that they belong to a religious country deeply interested in their religious creed; and that between the Jew and the Christian there must be intimate relations of sympathy and pious sentiment."

Therefore, feeling convinced that the question was advancing in a legitimate fashion and approaching a satisfactory issue, he regretted the measure now before them. The Jews were a race that could afford to wait. They were not a new people who had just got into notice, and who, if their claims were not recognized, might disappear. "They are," exclaimed Mr. Disraeli, "an ancient people, a famous people, an enduring people, and a people who in the end have generally attained

\* Like Lord John Russell, Baron Rothschild had been returned as one of the members for the city of London. It was unjustly said that the only reason why Lord John advocated the removal of Jewish disabilities was to obtain the admission of his colleague into parliament. It was for the individual, not for the moral principle, they said, he fought.



their objects. I hope parliament may endure for ever, and sometimes I think it will; but I cannot help remembering that the Jews have outlived Assyrian kings, Egyptian Pharaohs, Roman Cæsars, and Arabian caliphs; and, therefore, I think we need not precipitate their claims to their ultimate prejudice and against public feeling, but that we may freely leave them to their own course, sure that argument and fair discussion will facilitate and accomplish them." He lamented the manner in which Jewish claims were mixed up with other interests in the measure they were now discussing. It was a bill in which the word "Jew" never once appeared. "Why has the noble lord," asked Mr. Disraeli, "prejudiced the Jewish claims which, though objected to, were only objected to by a minority, and which were objected to on single and simple grounds which we might meet by argument and master by time? Why, I say, has the noble lord prejudiced those claims by mixing them with subjects that to the people of this country must appear of infinitely greater importance, and which involve us in the consideration of some of the most difficult political problems of the present day? I deeply regret that the noble lord has taken that course."

Mr. Disraeli expressed his fears that additional odium would be created against the Jews by their cause being associated with this matter of the oaths, and by their introduction into the House being sought through the omission of the words, "on the true faith of a Christian." Why, he asked, was it necessary to effect the emancipation of the Jews by the omission of those words? It was his opinion that if the emancipation of the Jews had been sought on the broad principle of religious liberty, the case would have been much simplified, and would have been divested of much unnecessary prejudice that had been excited against it. "I hope to see the day arrive," cried Mr. Disraeli, "when by the free will of parliament a Jew

may take his seat in this House, and take it, not by the odious omission of the words 'on the true faith of a Christian' from one general oath, but by the free declaration of a creed of which he ought on every account to be proud."

Then criticising the other clauses of the bill, the leader of the Opposition proceeded to state that he thought the alteration in the oath of supremacy imprudent and unstatesmanlike; whilst the change meditated in the Roman Catholic oath would simply revive those politico-religious discussions which had been already too prevalent in the country. Nor could he approve of any measure which, at a time when the papacy was active and ambitious, and ritualism was sapping the foundations of the established church, would tend to the relinquishing of their Protestant securities. Holding these views, he felt himself constrained to vote against the measure. "The House may believe them to be only phrases of debate," concluded Mr. Disraeli, with that solemnity which, because it was seldom indulged in, was always very impressive, "when I declare that I never took a course which gave me more pain than that which I take on this occasion, and which I feel it my duty to take; but I can assure the House that I never spoke with more sincerity or with so much pain on any subject. Disagreeing on general principles with the noble lord, I might have left the House; I might have said, 'I am in favour of the political emancipation of the Jews, and indirectly this bill may effect that object, and I am justified so far in supporting it; while on the other hand, I think, both for the sake of my Roman Catholic as for my Protestant fellow-subjects, nothing can be more unwise than the general course which the government are taking with respect to oaths;' and as I could not support the bill, I might have absented myself from the House. But I have felt it my duty to be present, and with the kind indulgence of the House, very imperfectly at this late hour to express my general views on the



question. If the noble lord will retrace his steps and go on with a subject which I thought he had near his heart, I shall follow the course which I have uniformly taken, and give the noble lord my earnest support. The noble lord has on previous occasions taunted me with being silent in debate when the question has been before the House; but as my feelings were peculiar on the subject, I had no wish to obtrude them upon the House. I have never been false to the principle involved. Not merely in this House, but by other modes, even at great sacrifices, I have endeavoured to advance that which I believed to be a sacred cause. I trust the House will not set down to egotism these expressions; but as there have been unfair insinuations of attempted influence on my conduct in respect to this subject at various times by those political friends with whom it is my happiness to act, I may be permitted to add that at no time, and under no circumstances, has a single word escaped from any gentleman near me, which would tend to control or influence my conduct in that respect. They knew from the first, and all must have known it who would have condescended to inquire into my opinions, how profound and fervent were my convictions on this great question. They knew that at all sacrifices I would uphold that cause; and though I deeply regret the course which the noble lord has taken—though I believe it to be one in which he will not only increase the difficulty with which the Jews have to contend, but will create in this country, between considerable classes of Her Majesty's subjects, misunderstandings which, at a time like the present, should have certainly been avoided—still it is my conviction, as certain as I am now addressing you, sir, that the time will come when the Jews will receive in this country full and complete emancipation. The noble lord believes they will receive it, because he has confidence in the principle of religious liberty. I, too, sir, respect that principle; but so far as the Jews are con-

cerned, I have faith in that Almighty Being who has never deserted them."

On a division the government was defeated by a majority of four.

A few evenings after this defeat, on the occasion of the withdrawal of the bribery bills, Lord John Russell, irritated at the recent triumph of the Opposition, and still more at the severe sarcasms of Mr. Disraeli upon the government introducing measures and then withdrawing them, taunted the member for Bucks as to the manner in which he voted upon Jewish questions. "The right hon. gentleman," said Lord John, "has repeatedly declared—I have no doubt with great sincerity—his wish to see the Jews in possession of the privileges which are enjoyed by all the other subjects of Her Majesty. He thinks them peculiarly worthy of those privileges—I believe he thinks them more worthy than Protestants or Roman Catholics, or any class of Christians. Still, notwithstanding his great anxiety to see the Jews in possession of those privileges, the right hon. gentleman sometimes stays away and sometimes votes against them; the political convenience of the hour always seems to overcome his attachment to the cause."

To this accusation Mr. Disraeli at once replied (May 29, 1854). "The noble lord," he exclaimed, "said that I pretend to be an assertor of the claims of the Jews to political equality with the other subjects of Her Majesty, and that I made that cause subservient to political schemes; that when occasion suited me I left the House and did not vote; and that when on the occasion I found it convenient to vote against it I did not hesitate to do so. Now I give to that statement an unequivocal and unqualified denial. I deny that I ever absented myself at any period of my life from any division in which the claims of the Jews were concerned. I give the noble lord's statement an unequivocal and unqualified denial. The noble lord is leader of the House of Commons, and he ought not to make lightly



any such statements of any man, and least of all of me with regard to such a subject. He ought to have informed himself better before he made such a statement. Suppose I had got up and said that the noble lord made parliamentary reform a mere political convenience—that when it suited him he made it convenient to quit the House, and did not vote at all on the subject; and then again, when it suited him, he also knew how to give a vote against that principle. I might, and without much ingenuity, make a very colourable case against him on that head; but I should scorn to do it. I am convinced that the noble lord is sincere in the views which he professes on the subject of parliamentary reform, and that, whenever he has voted against any measure of parliamentary reform, he has done so from a sense of duty, convinced that by so doing he was benefiting the cause to which he wished success. But the noble lord can make no colourable case against me. I never on any occasion have quitted this House; I never absented myself from any division in which the claims of the Jews were concerned; and if I voted against his bill the other night, I tell the noble lord that I do not consider that I voted against a bill which could have benefited the Jews, but, on the contrary, that I voted against a bill which, I believe, would have been of greater injury to the Jews than any measure ever brought forward.”

This refutation was not to end the dispute. At a later hour in the evening, Mr. Bernal Osborne—the Mr. Bernal Osborne whose sense of humour was so dominant that he had no objection to turn his past political career into one great joke, for he was now, as secretary to the admiralty, meekly eating dirt under the chief whom he had called “a boa-constrictor,” and whom he had made the butt of his choicest gibes and sneers—it was this consistent and single-minded politician who now rose up to impugn Mr. Disraeli’s accuracy and course of conduct. He thought, remarked the disinterested wag, that the right hon.

gentleman would have done better had he refreshed his mind previous to giving these unequivocal contradictions. What would the House say when they found that the right hon. gentleman, who gave such an unqualified denial to the assertion of Lord John Russell, that on one occasion the right hon. gentleman, notwithstanding his “peculiar and mysterious feelings”\* on the subject, voted against the bill for Jewish emancipation? Yet such was the fact. In 1850 there was a motion that the House should pledge itself early in the following session to take into its serious consideration the form of the oath of abjuration as it affected the Jews, with a view to relieve them from the disabilities under which they laboured. “That,” laughed Mr. Osborne, himself a man in whose veins ran Hebrew blood, “was a pretty distinct motion for the right hon. gentleman to vote against—he who complained that the Jews had not a form of oath to themselves—who insisted that Christianity was under such great obligations to the Jews, that they ought to enter parliament in a way peculiar to themselves;” and yet Mr. Disraeli had voted against the measure! On another similar occasion—also in the year 1850—he found that Mr. Disraeli had not entered his vote. Mr. Osborne concluded by advising the right hon. gentleman in future not to hazard such rash denials.

Mr. Disraeli was not slow to meet his antagonist. “I need make no remark,” he said, rising up at once, “on the harangue of the honourable gentleman. All I said was that I never absented myself from the House whenever the question of the emancipation of the Jews was before it. The hon. gentleman has referred to one division in which my name does not appear. It is sufficient for me to say that at the time, owing to a severe indisposition, I was absent for some time from parliament. Of course that was not what the noble lord meant to charge against me. His charge was that I left

\* Mr. Disraeli said *peculiar*, not “*peculiar and mysterious*.”



the House to avoid the vote. With regard to the other point to which the honourable gentleman has alluded, it is impossible for me to rebut the charge without looking back to the motion in question to see what the technical terms of the motion were as distinguished from other motions. I remember that at a morning sitting the question was discussed, and there were some twenty divisions, and I voted I think on every occasion with the noble lord; but there were some cross divisions on particular points, when it is possible I may not have voted with the hon. gentleman the secretary for the admiralty. I remember very well there was a great number of divisions, and there was one resolution moved that Baron Rothschild should now be admitted to take the oaths at the table. To that I objected, and with the noble lord, and with many other hon. members who supported Jewish emancipation, I voted against the motion. I cannot be sure of the particular vote; but of this I am sure, that if the matter be investigated, what I have stated will be found to be substantially correct."

This statement was "substantially correct." To reply to the strictures of a buffoon is perhaps a waste of time, but briefly the facts of the case are as follows:—On the evening of August 5, 1850, the following motion was submitted to the House of Commons: "That the Baron Lionel Nathan de Rothschild is not entitled to vote in this House, or to sit in the House during any debate, until he shall take the oath of abjuration in the form appointed by law." Upon that motion an amendment was moved. Three divisions took place upon the general question, and the last division was upon the following motion—"That this House will, at the earliest opportunity in the next session of parliament, take into its serious consideration the form of the oath of abjuration, with a view to relieve Her Majesty's subjects professing the Jewish religion." Against this last motion Mr. Disraeli voted. It was not a motion, be it observed, for the admission of the Jews

into parliament; it was not even a motion relating to the state of Baron Rothschild; but it was a motion pledging the House to a given proceeding in the next session, and to that pledge Mr. Disraeli objected. It was his opinion that no measure should be introduced for the relief of the Jews unless the government felt sure that it would pass. To be defeated upon such a question only stimulated the prejudices of the day, and worked the Jewish cause harm. The Russell cabinet was weak, and it was for that reason that Mr. Disraeli objected to the course taken in this matter by Lord John. There was no hurry; the Jews could wait, and Mr. Disraeli felt assured that their emancipation would soon be effectually secured. Some political topics are like some peculiar fruits: they cannot be forced, they must be left to the natural order of events; and the Jewish question was one of these topics. Mr. Disraeli having once in the House fully given forth his views upon the subject, having constantly in his books referred to the matter, naturally considered that there was no occasion for him to repeat himself again and again. When the question came up he was therefore content to record a silent vote. On the very morning of the day upon which Mr. Osborne accused Mr. Disraeli of being false to the cause he supported, the leader of the Opposition had thus explained his position:—"I have, I may add," he said (August 5, 1850), "when the question before the House has been the removal of the disabilities now in discussion, given the measures for such removal my unhesitating and unvarying support. I have, indeed, been sometimes accused of not accompanying the exercise of my suffrage with an expression of opinion on the subject itself. . . . Sir, if I thought that anything which I could say would have tended to accomplish an object dear to my heart as to my convictions, my vote would not have been a silent one. But inasmuch as I believe that my opinions upon the subject are not shared by one single member on



either side of the House, I thought that it was consistent, both with good sense and good taste, that after having once unequivocally expressed the grounds on which my vote was given, I should have taken refuge in a silence which at least would not offend the opinions or the prejudices of any hon. gentleman on either side. The opinions I then expressed I now retain. They are unchanged; and were it not presumptuous to speak of human opinions as being immutable, I would express my belief that they are unchangeable."

Was it possible for advocacy to be more decided and consistent? If there were one accusation more than another which we should have thought the hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness of human nature would have avoided, it would have been the throwing a doubt upon the sincerity of Mr. Disraeli's devotion to the Hebrew cause. His loyalty to his brethren was so open, so constant, so unselfish, and inspired by such high and noble motives, that it appeared only a hate blind with personal rancour could ever stultify itself by calling it into question. "I know certainly," said Mr. Walpole, whose sensitive and generous disposition would not permit him to remain silent at such a moment, "that no one in this House is more sincere than my right hon. friend in his desire to obtain for the Jews admission to this House and to seats in parliament. I know that in private as well as in public; and though I have been opposed, and unfortunately shall be always, I am afraid, opposed to my right hon. friend on this question, yet I also know, and I feel bound to declare, that if there is one thing more than another for which my right hon. friend is entitled to the respect of both sides of the House, it is for the manly and honourable way in which he has come forward in support of the Jewish race; and I think I might add, that were it not for the manly support which he has given to that question, his position, if he had consulted his own interests, would have been higher—if at least it could have been higher—than the

position which he now occupies. But his friends have not lost confidence in him because he has stood by his principles, though they do not agree with him on that particular point; and they never will withdraw their confidence from him while from honest conviction he pursues his course, though different from theirs, in the same manly and honourable way which he has hitherto done." So ended this "personal explanation," about which so many malicious falsehoods have been circulated.

In nothing was the general incompetence of the coalition cabinet more exhibited than in its conduct of public business. Important measures were introduced, and then postponed; bills were brought in, and then withdrawn; subjects were announced for discussion which were never debated upon; whilst defeat followed defeat when by chance the government attempted to fulfil its promises. Mr. Disraeli, towards the end of May, passed in review the blunders of the session. He considered some explanation due from ministers as to the probable progress of public business. Seven important measures had been introduced to the notice of parliament; of these seven the government had been defeated in three, three they had withdrawn, and upon the seventh they had received considerable, though partial, defeats.\* When ministers introduced these important subjects—all measures attacking either the rights of the citizen or the institutions of the country—to the consideration of parliament, did they believe that they had a fair prospect of carrying them through? If they had no such prospect, were they measures which they ought so to have announced and introduced to the notice of members?

"It is of importance," said Mr. Disraeli with quiet sarcasm, "to impress these circumstances on the attention of the House and country, because we must never

\* *Defeated.*—Law of Settlement, Scotch Education, and Parliamentary Oaths Bills.

*Withdrawn.*—Parliamentary Reform, Bribery Prevention, and Civil Service Reform Bills.

*Partially defeated.*—Oxford University Reform Bill.



forget we enjoy the inestimable fortune of having our affairs administered by men remarkably distinguished for their abilities; by men who have made enormous sacrifices for their country, and for themselves. No man has made greater sacrifices than the noble lord himself (Lord John Russell); for he has thrown over his old friends and colleagues, and connected himself with a coterie of public men who have passed a great part of their lives in depreciating his abilities and running down his eminent career. And if the noble lord had succeeded in the object for which he made these enormous sacrifices, I should understand more clearly than I do at present the position of the noble lord. But at the end of May, to find that out of seven of the most important measures ever proposed to parliament, three have been withdrawn, and three have only brought defeats to the government, I cannot help feeling that the time has come when it is impossible not to consider that we have not received that ample compensation which was held out to us for the break up of parties, for departing from the spirit and genius of our parliamentary constitution; that we have not received that full, adequate, and ample compensation in well-digested and statesmanlike measures which was held out to us; that, in short, when we were told that though the government to be sure was to have no principles, it was to have 'all the talents,' we had a right to expect that the noble lord would at least have done something—that at least he would have achieved something as compensation for this remarkable state of affairs, which has banished from him all his natural colleagues to invisible positions in the House, and left him on that bench surrounded by those who have been decrying his career for the last quarter of a century."

Ministerial incapacity was now to have a brief respite from the criticisms of the Opposition. Parliament was prorogued August 12, 1854; and the Speaker, on behalf of the Commons, in his address to

the throne apologized, owing to the war, for having not been able to consider the various measures submitted to them. "It has been found impossible," he said, "to mature them during the session, as the progress of our legislation has been interrupted by the commencement of a war which, notwithstanding your Majesty's unremitting endeavours to maintain peace, has been forced upon us by the unwarrantable aggression of Russia on the Turkish empire. Deploring most deeply the necessity for such a contest, we recognize the imperative duty of protecting an old and faithful ally from oppression, and of vindicating the rights of nations; and we believe it well becomes the character and honour of this great empire, adhering to the faith of treaties, to frustrate if possible the designs of a monarch whose ambition, if uncontrolled, would endanger the security of every nation in Europe. Entertaining these views, your faithful Commons have cheerfully and without hesitation placed at the disposal of your Majesty whatever supplies have been deemed requisite to carry on this just and unavoidable war—thus enabling your Majesty to send forth fleets and armies complete beyond all former precedent in discipline and equipment. The efforts of your Majesty to strengthen the arms and aid the cause of Turkey have been cordially seconded by the emperor of the French, and the joint forces of England and France—their ancient hostility converted into generous emulation—now threaten the coasts and harbours of Russia, to the most distant extremity of her vast dominions."

The House had certainly been liberal in voting supplies; but as yet the hostile proceedings of the allies had been more negative than positive. What successes had been gained were due almost entirely to the courage and loyalty of the Turks themselves. At Oltenitza the Ottoman had made the Muscovite bite the dust. At Citate the Russians were again defeated. Near Passova the arms of the brilliant Omar Pasha were also crowned with vic-



tory. The Russians had entered upon the siege of Silistria with ardour, but after a few weeks of unsuccessful effort, were compelled to abandon the attempt. At Giurgevo the Turks were once more triumphant. Then came reverses. At Bayazid and at Kurekdere the Russians were victorious; but what future Muscovite triumphs might have been achieved, were now checked by the arrival of the allies. The English troops were commanded by Lord Raglan, who had seen service under the Duke of Wellington, and had lost an arm at Waterloo; whilst the hopes of France were intrusted to Marshal St. Arnaud, a brilliant and dashing soldier of fortune. Up to this moment the Ottoman empire had fought almost single-handed against her foe. The allied Baltic fleets had sailed north, but as yet, with the exception of the capture of the half-fortified Bomarsund, had wrought nothing in favour of the Turk. In the south Odessa had been bombarded, but the attempt of the allies upon Petropaulovski had not been successful. What glory had fallen to the Ottoman arms was due to the skilful generalship of the bold Omar Pasha. But at last the long-expected aid was quickly coming up from the west. The authorities in London and Paris had resolved upon making a descent upon the Crimea. Sebastopol was the great arsenal of Russia, and protected by its formidable fortifications, the Russian Black Sea fleet lay securely sheltered. The destruction of Sebastopol would, therefore, inflict a blow upon the schemes of the Czar from which they could never recover. The fall of Sebastopol signified the ruin of the arsenal, the ruin of the Black Sea fleet, and the ruin of all hopes of bombarding the vulnerable points of Turkey. In the second week of September there landed on the south-western shores of the Crimea 30,000 French, 27,000 English, and 7000 Turks, all eager to meet the enemy and crush his aggressive ambition. And now important events followed each other in quick succession. The arms of the allies were victorious upon the heights of the Alma. Fearful of

the future, Mentschikoff gave orders to sink the Russian fleet in the harbour of Sebastopol. Early in October the siege army encamped before Sebastopol, and the bombardment commenced in downright earnest. Then followed the battle of Balaklava, with its memorable charge of the Light Brigade, and the victory of Inkermann. Half mad with rage and despair, the Czar saw his plans defeated, and that he had roused an enemy which would now tax all his resources to resist.

Yet these victories, owing to the incapacity of the coalition cabinet to conduct a grave European war, were bought at a terrible and needless sacrifice of English life. Cholera broke out, and beneath its devastating influence the ranks of our regiments daily thinned. The hospitals were ill officered, and lacked all the necessary supplies of drugs and nourishing stores. Beneath the strain put upon them the transport and commissariat systems utterly collapsed. Provisions were sent where they were not wanted, and were left rotting; summer clothing arrived in the middle of winter; furs and woollen goods reached their destination when the heat was almost tropical; and nurses generally came to the bedside when the patients had died. Everything, as Mr. Disraeli said, arrived too late. The turn of events had now made it absolutely necessary that the army should winter in the Crimea, and Lord Raglan directed the commissary-general to effect the necessary preparations. At the very outset grave difficulties had to be surmounted. The abandonment of the northern side of the Crimea after the battle of the Alma had forced the allies to content themselves with pitching their tents and huts upon a barren patch of ground, so small and sterile that it was incapable of yielding the soldiers not only food, but even forage and fuel—"things that rarely before," writes Mr. Kinglake, "had been wanting to the victorious invaders of a country in which hay and wood-stores abounded." No other



spot could be selected: for the enemy, owing to their flank marches, had compelled the allies to encamp upon this uninviting locality, or else to abandon the Crimea altogether. Whilst the Russians had their immense flocks of sheep "under the eyes of our outlying sentries, and showed to any observers who chose to put up their field-glasses their stacks of forage piled up in ranks that seemed miles and miles long," the English and French, deprived completely of the resources of the invaded country, were wholly dependent upon supplies brought by sea. The forage for the cattle and the provisions for the men had to be shipped across the stormy waters of the Black Sea from the stores piled up on the shores of the Bosphorus.

And now a series of terrible blunders occurred. The goods required to fill the store-houses on the Bosphorus had to be conveyed straight either from England or France, and it was soon discovered that the pressure thus suddenly put upon the transport service was greater than it could bear, and that our supply of merchant vessels and steamers was inadequate to convey the mass of articles necessary for a winter campaign. Cargoes were left rotting on the quays because there were no ships to carry them to our ill-clad and half-famished soldiery. Tents and blankets, so useful on the bleak heights of the Chersonese, remained still housed on the Bosphorus on account of the lack of transports to ship them to Balaklava. Wanting food, wanting serviceable clothing, wanting proper medical attendance, our men had not only to face the frosts and snows of a Siberian winter, but still to keep to their work in the trenches, and carry on the siege of Sebastopol. Gradually the awful results of this mismanagement began to assert themselves. From time to time reinforcements landed at Balaklava, yet they failed to effect a sustained increase of the number of men under arms; for the new-comers, suddenly subjected to the rigours of a winter campaign, fell sick with distressing rapidity, "so that even within a few days

the fresh troops became rather a superadded assemblage of hospital sufferers than an actual accession to strength." After disembarking at Balaklava, the 9th Regiment at once marched up to the camp awaiting it on the Chersonese table-land; but, so we learn from Mr. Kinglake, there the regiment sickened so fast, that after a few days of campaigning, only a small remnant of men fit for duty were left. The Guards had received some strong drafts of recruits sent fresh from England, yet when January came to an end the three battalions, which lately had constituted a splendid brigade, could only muster some 300 men for duty. The main body of the Scots Fusiliers, comprising at the time seven companies, was assembled one day with all its effective strength to greet the return of its colonel; yet the whole force thus turned out to welcome their commander consisted of under one hundred men. "The 63rd Regiment," remarks Mr. Kinglake, "may almost be said to have disappeared."

The sufferings which caused this decimation were indeed of the bitterest character. Our army was not only threatened with reduction, but with virtual extinction. "In proportion to the numbers," writes Mr. Kinglake, "the English army was undergoing at one time a fiercer havoc than that which ravaged London in the days of the great plague; but no awe, like the awe of a city that is silenced by plague, possessed the English camp. The camp, it is true, was quiet, but the silence maintained by our soldiers was the silence of weariness, the silence of men bearing cold and hardships of all kinds with obstinate pride." The courage of our men was indeed, as the Sebastopol committee declared, "unsurpassed in the annals of war." As long as English soldiers could keep themselves out of the sick list they cheerily went their rounds, mounted guard, or worked during those bitter nights in the trenches. A bite at a biscuit, a sip of whisky, and dressed anyhow, provided warmth could be obtained, the men blithely obeyed all orders, and no sounds of murmur



or discontent were heard. The troops imagined that the siege would soon be at an end, and that they would shortly be breaking into Sebastopol. It was in mercy that the future was veiled before them.\*

In turning over the fascinating pages of Mr. Kinglake's history, it is the most piteous reading to see how utterly incapable were the transport and commissariat services to make any headway against the difficulties which surrounded them. Funds they had in abundance; but experience proves, comments our historian, that a government, buying things for an army from traders at home, may have, in spite of all their command of money, to wait a long time before the articles required are ready for delivery. Tents for our troops on the

Chersonese were among the most urgent of all their wants, yet it took seven months before the 3000 tents ordered in November had been landed at Balaclava. "If commerce was thus slow in London, the greatest mart in the world," cogently remarks Mr. Kinglake, "much more might it be expected to baffle the commissary-general, when labouring to effect purchases of those supplies—such as horses, bullocks, vegetables, sheep, hay—which he sought from the Levant." Yet another instance, which is, perhaps, the best illustration of the collapse of the transport system that the "winter trouble" affords. The Prince Consort, seeing that our army was likely to winter on the heights before Sebastopol, had resolved to send out to his brother officers of the

\* These statements are not in the least exaggerated. I have before me the private diary of an old friend who held a high command during the Crimean war. A few extracts will prove that the miseries the soldiers had to endure were no imaginary grievances. If a general officer was in such a plight, what must have been the condition of the private?

"October 11, 1854.—Had a small sleep after last night's work; then boiled my shirt again. We had no soap, and took to boiling our shirts. I had worn mine twenty-eight days, having never undressed since I landed in the Crimea.

"October 30.—Baggage coming into camp after forty-six days' absence, during which time we had no change of dress. We were in rags, and not very clean rags. For forty-six days and nights I never undressed but to wash myself, and as for the old shirt it fell to pieces. The poor men were in filthy rags. Russian knapsacks were cut up and bound round their legs; their feet were swollen, and many were without shoes.

"November 7.—Rambled over battle-ground. Hear those piercing cries! Men don't often cry, but now they rend the air with life's last shriek of agony. They are being carried away on mules, their legs and arms and mutilated bodies only hanging together. Here met Sir John Pennefather. Did you ever hear anything so terrible as the screams of those poor fellows?" he said; "I am going away to get out of hearing of such misery; they are all about my tent there lying day and night on the wet ground, starving and dying, and screeching in agony."

"November 13.—It poured rain all night; nothing can be more wretched than the camp and *its furniture*. Men in the trenches twenty-four hours at a time, soaked to the skin; no change when they come up to their miserable tents, hardly a twig now to be got to boil their bit of salt pork; short of rations, too, for want of transport; everything cheerless, the sick lie down to die in peace in the miry clay, they have no energy left. *Thousands* might have been saved, but for the red tape! How many more are yet to suffer?

"November 29.—A most frightful day of rain and storm. All the elements of destruction seem to be gathering against us. It is dragging on a miserable existence in miry clay. No fuel, no clothing, no rum, short rations, no communication with Balaclava; cattle starving, so weak and exhausted that they have not power to move under a load. Average loss now, sixty-five men a day. I hope it will not soon be double.

"December 12.—Our men are cheerful under privation and hard work such as the English army never before encountered. We are a savage-looking people; very hard up for fuel; not a twig now to be seen for many miles in the distance; the men grub up the roots of the late brushwood to cook their little rations; and I am not ashamed to say that I cut and carried home on my back, a distance of two miles, a bundle of sticks for my own fire, to cook my ration of salt pork.

"December 16.—Rained all last night, and snow this morning; the deep misery and wretched condition of the troops cannot be described.

"December 24.—Rain, sleet, and snow; 1200 men going down on duty wet to the skin. 89th Regiment one week in camp, and have buried fifteen men. The young lads cannot endure the fatigue; they lie down wet on the wet sod, helpless, unattended, and shiver away their young lives in silent sorrow.

"December 25.—No rations for my men. There was no feeling of discontent among these orderly soldiers; they bore everything with most wonderful patience.

"December 30.—Hard firing all night. Men exhausted and dying; 2900 of third division sick to-day. The sick and non-effective in our small army amount to 10,000. Biting cold.

"January 11, 1855.—The 46th Regiment, just two months in camp, have buried 189 men! The sick of my own regiment to-day, 356; brigade ditto, 1220; the army, 14,800!

"Soldiers are sent from the Balaclava Hospital in ship-loads, to die at Scutari; hundreds thrown into the Black Sea. They arrive without clothing; a wet blanket covered with vermin, a ragged coat and trousers, with an old forage cap, is the extent of their kit. 1473 were buried from the hospital in January, 1855; their graves were close to the general hospital; dead dogs, horses, and vermin lay all about to increase disease. The floors of the hospital were wet, and would not dry; the whole place undrained, and the men were poisoned with animal matter. From June, '54, to June, '55, the hospitals in the Bosphorus received 43,228 sick and wounded soldiers, of whom 5432 died. Fire and sword contributed but 4161 admissions, and 395 deaths. In November, December, and January, the admissions into hospitals were 11,000, and amongst this multitude there were but twenty-two shirts: Miss Nightingale issued from her private stores 16,000 shirts." And so on.

Grenadier Guards a supply of fur coats. This warm clothing was promptly despatched, yet it did not reach the Grenadiers till the spring of the following year, "when already a warmth as of summer had caused such hot things as furs to be simply objects of loathing to the eye!" And even when goods contrived to reach the harbour of Balaklava, there was the difficulty, it appears, of having them carried up to the camp. "For want of means to land or tranship goods which had reached their destined ports," says Mr. Kinglake, "they too often remained on board during lengthened periods; and, apparently, it now and then happened that a vessel left the port she had reached without having completely discharged her cargo, yet continued to go on plying, so that stores and munitions long moved to and fro on the waters. In one ghastly instance, the body of an Irish officer, despatched for internment at home, was somehow 'mis-laid,' like the Prince Consort's furs, and apparently it must have voyaged, like a troubled spirit, from shore to shore, for the utmost labour of official investigators proved absolutely unable to trace it." As if our troops, shivering in an Arctic cold, torn by hunger and worn by toil, had not enough to test their temper and endurance, a terrible storm, one of the fiercest that had ever visited that district, broke out shortly after winter quarters had been assigned the men. It was an awful tempest of wind, thunder and lightning, heavy rain and blinding snow, which raged both on shore and sea. No fewer than twenty-one of the vessels freighted with munitions and stores for our army were wrecked. On the heights tents were rent to pieces and swept away utterly, with all the things they contained. Horses broke loose and fled wildly in all directions. Waggons were overturned, and the stores of food and forage which had been brought up with so much labour to the camp, and which were so precious, were almost entirely destroyed. The hospital marquees had been the first to fall, and beneath them lay the sick and dying, exposed all at once

to the pitiless blast and the thickening snows. The trenches were quickly flooded, and the men on duty were unable to cook their food, for no camp fires could be lit. More than one brave fellow, we learn, laid himself down on that terrible night, starved and benumbed, to find on the frozen snow his shroud and grave.

Unfortunately, among the vessels wrecked in the Black Sea was the *Prince*, a ship containing everything that was most wanted—warlike stores of every description, surgical instruments, Guernsey frocks, stockings, boots, shoes; in short, all that foresight could devise for the equipment and comfort of the troops. Certainly, during the months of the winter of 1854–55 the endurance of English soldiery was tried more seriously than it had ever been tested since the days of the Walcheren expedition. And yet what made men's hearts fierce with indignation was the fact that in the French camp matters had been differently organized. There the soldier had his rations served out to him with regularity, he was well clothed and stoutly housed, his sanitary condition was keenly looked after, and he lacked for nothing which a soldier required when in face of the enemy. "Why," it was angrily asked in London, "should there be such grave mismanagement in the English camp when France was setting us such a totally different example?" Mr. Kinglake answers the query by attributing the blame to the various war departments which then existed, and which were each independent of the other. To use a homely proverb, it was a case of "too many cooks spoiling the broth." Before her feud with Russia, England possessed the Horse Guards, and in addition a couple of departments which connected themselves with the grave affairs of war by "three quaintly distinctive prepositions." There was the colonial minister, who was also the minister of war, or, in other words, the secretary of state for war; whilst the head of the War Office was the secretary at war. Each of these ministers had his own independent duties to perform; and



as it appeared to be the rule of the department for no colleague to consult his fellow, a great amount of ignorance prevailed, and confusion necessarily arose. When the English nation became informed of the state of her soldiers in the Crimea, and of the unnecessary privations they had been made to endure, a violent outcry against the government was raised. A pamphlet was circulated with the title "Whom shall we Hang?" and, indeed, in the present temper of the country, vindictive measures would have been almost popular.

To soften the public wrath Lord John Russell wished the Duke of Newcastle to be succeeded at the War Department (which had recently been severed from the Colonies) by Lord Palmerston; but the premier declined to throw over a colleague in the absence of charges that had not been proved. At such a crisis the country refused to be deprived of the assistance of the legislature. Parliament re-assembled in the second week of December. "I have called you together," said Her Majesty, addressing the Houses, "at this unusual period of the year in order that by your assistance I may take such measures as will enable me to prosecute the great war in which we are engaged with the utmost vigour and effect. This assistance, I know, will be readily given; for I cannot doubt that you share my conviction of the necessity of sparing no effort to augment my forces now engaged in the Crimea. The exertions they have made and the victories they have obtained are not exceeded in the brightest pages of our history, and have filled me with admiration and gratitude. The hearty and efficient co-operation of the brave troops of my ally the emperor of the French, and the glory acquired in common, cannot fail to cement still more closely the union which happily subsists between the two nations. It is with satisfaction I inform you that, together with the emperor of the French, I have concluded a treaty of alliance with the emperor of Austria, from which I anticipate important advantages to

the common cause. . . . I rely with confidence on your patriotism and public spirit. I feel assured that in the momentous contest in which we are engaged, you will exhibit to the world the example of a united people. Then shall we obtain the respect of other nations, and may trust that by the blessing of God we shall bring the war to a successful termination."

An important debate ensued in both Houses upon the address. Lord Derby, in rising to express the Conservative opinion of the country, severely criticised the course the government had pursued. He touched upon the ministerial shortcomings, not to revert to the past, but to insure attention for the future. At the commencement of a war, he admitted, there must be mistakes and omissions; but his charge against the government was, that from the commencement of hostilities they had lived from hand to mouth, showing a total want of prescience, and providing for each successive emergency after, and not before, it arose. The fatal words, "too late," had adhered to the whole conduct of the war. When war was declared, what did ministers do? They sent out some thousands of men; took great credit to themselves for their unparalleled exertions; and then held their hand, saying we have done all that is necessary. There were no reinforcements, no army of reserve; the 30,000 men were launched forth to depend on their own resources, because the cabinet lacked foresight. Was it possible that such a handful of troops could settle the question of Russian supremacy? The expedition to the Crimea had been decided upon by the government at home in the face of representations made by generals of high distinction "of the insuperable difficulties of an attack upon Sebastopol," and therefore ministers were doubly bound to neglect nothing that could contribute to success; yet no steps were taken to reinforce the troops before the battle of Inkermann. Again, every branch in the service had broken down—the transport, commissariat, and medical branches had



all proved themselves unable to cope with existing circumstances, owing to the incapacity of the home authorities. If they wanted peace, said Lord Derby, they must be prepared for continued action, and to strike decided blows. "Depend upon it," urged his lordship, "knowing as I do the resources of the Russian empire, and knowing the character of the great man who rules it (for he is a great man, although now employing his vast resources for unworthy purposes), you will gain no peace, unless you conquer it. You must obtain, by your arms, such advantages and such a superiority as to force the emperor to submit to your terms of peace; but if you do not achieve some great successes, you may have a prolonged, a sanguinary, and possibly a disastrous war, but an honourable and a successful peace you cannot have."

In the Lower House Mr. Disraeli adopted the same tone. The cabinet had persisted in treating the war, which they now called a "great war," as a trifling affair. With an unanimous parliament, a popular war, unlimited supplies, and the most powerful ally in the world, yet what had they done? "I now ask the House," he said, "for a moment to turn round and consider, not whether there were sufficient nurses or surgeons at Scutari, not what was the number of pots of marmalade which should be sent out towards the support of our starving troops, but I ask the House to consider what have been the results which this ministry with these enormous advantages have obtained." He then reviewed the events of the campaign. The vaunted Baltic fleet—"greater than any Armada that ever figured in the history of our times"—had been despatched "with the blessings and the benison of our most experienced statesman, and had the advantage of being commanded by a true reformer" (Sir Charles Napier). And what had it done? It had destroyed the half finished fortifications of Bomarsund. What was the next act of the drama? "You attack with a force of 20,000 or 30,000

men a fortress probably as strong as Gibraltar, and better provisioned. And under what circumstances did you undertake this enterprise? The secretary of war tells you that their object is to strike at the heart of Russia in the south, and therefore they attacked Sebastopol. . . . But why attack the place at the wrong time and with ineffective means? It may be a question that there should be a campaign in the Crimea: none that there should not be a winter campaign. But you have chosen a winter campaign, and what have been your preparations for it? In November you gave orders to build huts. You have not yet sent out that winter clothing which is adapted to the climate. . . . You have commenced a winter campaign in a country which most of all should be avoided. You have commenced such a campaign—a great blunder, without providing for it—the next great blunder. The huts will arrive in January, and the furs probably will meet the sun in May. These are your preparations?" Mr. Disraeli then touched upon the magnanimity of the French government in consenting to co-operate with ministers who, as in the case of the existing cabinet, had commenced their official career by slandering the entire French nation from the emperor down to the private soldier; at the same time he warned the House, that unless he had evidence to the contrary, he would not believe that there was the smallest probability of Austria being a useful or sincere ally.

Hostile and severe in his criticisms, Mr. Disraeli had no intention of adopting a factious course towards the government. He disapproved of the conduct of the advisers of the crown; but the war was now not a coalition war, but a national war, and he could therefore only employ party tactics by acting injuriously to the general interests of the country. Such a proceeding was foreign to the loyalty and earnestness of his patriotism. In all measures relating to supply, and to the



efficient carrying on of hostilities, he gave the coalition the fullest and most generous support. As a proof of this absence of all ignoble party feeling, he eloquently seconded the motion of Lord John Russell (December 15, 1854), proposing a vote of thanks to the British forces in the East. No one succeeded better than Mr. Disraeli in the delivery of set, formal orations. His after-dinner speeches, his tributes to the memory of distinguished men who had passed into the "eternal silence," the speeches he gave at academy banquets, at the unveiling of statues, and at other similar ceremonies, are among the happiest of his oratorical effusions. He was amusing without flippancy, instructive without boredom, and dignified without pomposity. He said the right thing, and he said it precisely in the right manner. The speech he delivered on this occasion is little known, and will bear being transferred from the pages of Hansard without compression.

"Sir," said the Conservative leader, "there have been occasions in the history of this country when votes similar to these have been proposed to the House, when members have entered into criticisms on the conduct of commanders and the policy of ministers; but I am sure, however much we may venerate parliamentary precedents, that the House must have sympathized with the noble lord (Lord John Russell), when he said that to-night there would be no difference of opinion upon the motion he was about to submit to our notice. The noble lord has treated the theme which he has introduced in a manner so entirely worthy of its interest, that it would be unnecessary and unbecoming in me to enter into any detail of those actions which have recently commanded the admiration of the world. But I feel I am expressing the opinion of all present when I say that this is no common war, that will some day be covered with the mere dust of history. I feel that this is a war which will rank with those great struggles which produce not only historians, but in time

even poets, to celebrate their lasting achievements; like those famous deeds of the Crusades handed down to the wonder and admiration of man, and many of which have been accomplished in the memorable region where these great exploits are occurring. If I may be permitted for a moment to allude to what seems to be a characteristic feature, there is a singular completeness in this the first campaign of the allied armies which has scarcely attracted observation. The campaign opens by the allied troops taking by storm one of the most difficult positions in the world—an almost impregnable position; and it concludes, virtually, two months afterwards, by the same forces defending a similar position from a similar attack by an immense host. Thus we see, both in assault and defence, the same troops exhibiting the same admirable and unequalled qualities. Between these two almost epic events, I ought not to forget that there is a brilliant episode—that fight of Balaclava—that was a feat of chivalry, fiery with consummate courage, and bright with flashing valour; and though I cannot presume, with the authority of the noble lord, to single out the names of great commanders for the applause of the House of Commons, I cannot forget, I cannot refrain from calling to your recollection, that the two commanders on that memorable occasion lately sat among us on these benches, and that they, I am sure, will peculiarly value the sympathy of the colleagues whom they have quitted. Sir, the noble lord has very properly said that it is not for the House to criticise the tactics and strategy of campaigns; but it is open to us to draw some moral conclusions from the great events which are passing around us, and we may at least draw this from the war which has broken out. I think, what has occurred has shown that the arts of peace practised by a free people are not enervating. I think the deeds to which the noble lord has referred, both among the commanders and common soldiers, have shown that education has not a tendency



to diminish, but to refine and raise, the standard of the martial character. In these we may proudly recognize the might and prowess of a free and ancient people, led by their natural and traditionary chiefs. These are all circumstances and conditions which are favourable to our confidence in the progress of civilization, and flattering, I hope, to the consciousness of every Englishman.

"There is one point upon which I could have wished that the noble lord had also touched— I know there were so many subjects that he could not avoid touching that I share the admiration of the House at the completeness with which he seemed to have mastered all his themes; but when the noble lord recalled to our recollection the deeds of admirable valour and of heroic conduct which have been achieved upon the heights of Alma, of Balaclava, and of Inkermann, I could have wished that he had also publicly recognized that the deeds of heroism in this campaign had not been merely confined to the field of battle. We ought to remember the precious lives given to the pestilence of Varna and to the inhospitable shores of the Black Sea; these men, in my opinion, were animated by as heroic a spirit as those who have yielded up their lives amid the flash of artillery and the triumphant sound of trumpets. No, sir, language cannot do justice to the endurance of our troops under the extreme and terrible privations which circumstances have obliged them to endure. The high spirit of an English gentleman might have sustained him under circumstances which he could not have anticipated to encounter; but the same proud patience has been found among the rank and file. And it is these moral qualities that have contributed as much as others apparently more brilliant to those great victories which we are now acknowledging.

"Sir, the noble lord has taken a wise and generous course in combining with the House which he is about to propose to the British army and navy the thanks also of

the House of Commons to the army of our allies. Sir, that alliance which has now for some time prevailed between the two great countries of France and Britain has in peace been productive of advantage; but it is the test to which it has been put by recent circumstances that, in my opinion, will tend more than any other cause to confirm and consolidate that intimate union. That alliance, sir, is one that does not depend upon dynasties nor diplomacy. It is one which has been sanctioned by names to which we all look up with respect or with feelings even of a higher character. The alliance between France and England was inaugurated by the imperial mind of Elizabeth, and sanctioned by the profound sagacity of Cromwell; it exists now not more from feelings of mutual interest than from feelings of mutual respect, and I believe it will be maintained by a noble spirit of emulation.

"Sir, there is still another point upon which, although with hesitation, I will advert for a moment. I am distrustful of my own ability to deal becomingly with a theme on which the noble lord so well touched; but nevertheless I feel that I must refer to it. I was glad to hear from the noble lord that he intends to propose a vote of condolence with the relatives of those who have fallen in this contest. Sir, we have already felt, even in this chamber of public assemblage, how bitter have been the consequences of this war. We cannot throw our eyes over the accustomed benches, where we miss many a gallant and genial face, without feeling our hearts ache, our spirits sadden, and even our eyes moisten. But if that be our feeling here when we miss the long companions of our public lives and labours, what must be the anguish and desolation which now darken so many hearths! Never, sir, has the youthful blood of this country been so profusely lavished as it has been in this contest—never has a greater sacrifice been made, and for ends which more fully sanctify the sacrifice. But we can hardly hope now, in the

greenness of the wound, that even these reflections can serve as a source of solace. Young women who have become widows almost as soon as they had become wives—mothers who have lost not only their sons, but the brethren of those sons—heads of families who have seen abruptly close all their hopes of a hereditary line—these are pangs which even the consciousness of duty performed, which even the lustre of glory won, cannot easily or speedily alleviate and assuage. But let us indulge at least in the hope, in the conviction, that the time will come when the proceedings of this evening may be to such persons a source of consolation—when sorrow for the memory of those that are departed may be mitigated by the recollection that their death is at least associated with imperishable deeds, with a noble cause, and with a nation's gratitude."

During the few days before Christmas that parliament had re-assembled, a measure was introduced which caused a good deal of excitement, and encountered no little opposition. It was the enlistment of foreigners' bill—a measure which proposed to raise a force of foreigners, not exceeding 15,000 in number, to be drilled and trained in England.

To this foreign legion Mr. Disraeli objected. He did not concern himself with the constitutional aspect of the case. Whether it was agreeable to the feelings of the country that foreign troops should be enlisted, drilled, and disciplined, and that a large dépôt amounting to thousands should be reserved in the country, was a question not for lawyers to decide, but for the nation. He had no objection to see his countrymen—as was now the case—fighting by the side of foreigners who were allies; but he did object to their fighting by the side of mercenaries. He proved, by extracts from the correspondence of the Duke of Wellington, that no dependence could be

placed upon the fidelity of foreign mercenaries whose political sympathies were not engaged, and who were described by the duke as "so addicted to desertion that they were very unfit for our army." The measure would not only be ineffectual, but it was impolitic. The inference drawn by foreigners from this project would be that the recruiting power of England was exhausted. The bill was calculated to paralyse the power of the government, and to depress the spirit of the country. Appeals to the patriotism of the House of Commons had always been generously responded to; why then were the necessary preparations not made in time? They were engaged in a great war; let them at least have confidence in themselves and in their own resources. "I recommend," said Mr. Disraeli in conclusion, "gentlemen to refresh their memory by turning to the pages of Thucydides. I recommend them to read the despatch of Nicias to the Athenian assembly when he says, 'Men of Athens, I know that you do not like to hear the truth; but understand this—you sent me out to be a besieger, but lo! I am besieged!' Now, sir, we know what was the end of the Sicilian expedition. May that Divine Providence that has watched over the sage and the free save us from a similar conclusion! But at least let us do now what the Athenians did even in their proud despair. They sacrificed to the gods, and appealed to the energies of their countrymen. We at a moment, not, I believe, of equal danger, in a situation which I pray may end in triumph, but still a situation of doubt, of terrible anxiety, even of anguish—we bring in a bill in order to enlist foreign mercenaries to vindicate the fortunes of England!"

Though encountering no little opposition, the bill passed by a majority of thirty-eight. The day before Christmas-eve parliament adjourned to January 23, 1855.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### "PEACE BY NEGOTIATION."

THE Christmas that ensued was one of the dullest and most oppressive of seasons. There was scarcely a family which had not to mourn the loss of some dear relative. Letters and despatches were eagerly awaited, for no wife or sister felt sure that the next post would not bring tidings of the death of him she loved, laid low by Russian bullets or by fever brought on by the inclemency of the weather, and heightened by the privation of the necessaries of life. The winter at home was severe, and men, as they saw themselves surrounded by all the comforts of civilization, could not help thinking sadly of their brethren battling with the Arctic terrors of a Crimean December, and lacking all that was calculated to make such resistance effective. Day after day the newspapers revealed fresh blunders of the government—blunders supported by the testimony of invalided soldiers now safely housed on English soil—which plainly proved, if proof were wanting, how utterly incapable was the administration to deal with the difficulties of a winter campaign. Tents sent out in November had not yet arrived; furs and flannels were still lying packed on the quays awaiting the orders for shipment that were never delivered; stores of all kinds had been despatched to the wrong ports; the medical staff was at its wit's end to attend to the incessant appeals made upon its limited requirements; the hospitals were crowded, and no new shelter was forthcoming; the commissariat system admitted its inability to perform the duties intrusted to it; all was irritating confusion and wasted energy. Meanwhile, the soldiers in the trenches and on the heights before Sebastopol were dying by the score; the

Russian generals, Janvier and Fevrier, had no reason to complain of the manner in which the work of decimation was being carried on. Whilst such terrible events were taking place on the shores of the Black Sea, society at home was not in the mood to trouble itself as to festivities and hospitalities, in which it had no heart. It was more disposed to pray than to play. The churches were crowded, whilst the places of amusement were comparatively deserted.

On the meeting of parliament, the anxiety of the nation was not allowed to pass unheeded. In both Houses notices of motion were announced with the object of criticising the conduct of the government as to its supervision of military details. In the Upper Chamber Lord Lyndhurst moved, "That in the opinion of this House the expedition to the Crimea was undertaken by Her Majesty's government with very inadequate means, and without due caution or sufficient inquiry into the nature and extent of the resistance to be expected from the enemy; and that the neglect and mismanagement of the government in the conduct of the enterprise have led to the most disastrous results." In the Lower House Mr. Roebuck demanded a strict inquiry into the whole administration of the war, and moved, "That a select committee be appointed to inquire into the condition of our army before Sebastopol, and into the conduct of those departments of the government whose duty it has been to minister to the wants of that army." Whilst these two motions were hanging over the heads of ministers, an event occurred which ultimately led to the establishment of what Mr. Disraeli called



a "re-burnished" cabinet. Lord John Russell had long disapproved of the war department being intrusted to the control of the Duke of Newcastle, and he had more than once brought his objections before the attention of the cabinet. His views, however, failed to impress the prime minister with the necessity for change, and the secretary for war still continued in office. Lord John felt that the conduct of the government was to blame, that there were just grounds for the inquiry demanded by Mr. Roebuck, and that under the circumstances he considered it due to his sense of political honour to retire from the administration in which he had occupied so prominent a position. He tendered his resignation, and announced to a full and excited House of Commons the reasons which had induced him to take that course. He frankly admitted that the evils complained of by the Opposition called for parliamentary inquiry. The condition of the army before Sebastopol was most melancholy. The accounts which arrived from that quarter were not only painful, but horrible and heart-rending. "And, sir," continued this candid friend, "I must say that there is something that, with all the official knowledge to which I had access, is to me inexplicable in the state of that army. If you had been told as a reason against the expedition to the Crimea last year that your troops would be seven miles from the sea—seven miles from a secure port, which at that time, in contemplation of the expedition, we hardly hoped to possess, and that at seven miles' distance they should be in want of food, of clothes, and of shelter, to such a degree that they should perish at the rate of from ninety to one hundred a day—I should have considered such a prediction as utterly preposterous, such an objection as fanciful and unjust. But now we are forced to confess the notoriety of that state of circumstances."

He had, he confessed, never been satisfied with the administration of the war departments. Without wishing to throw any

blame upon the Duke of Newcastle, he had desired that to Lord Palmerston should have been intrusted the seals of the war department; but the prime minister had declined to concur in the suggestion. He would have tendered his resignation before this, only he had been dissuaded by Lord Palmerston, and had reluctantly consented to continue a member of the cabinet. But the motion of Mr. Roebuck compelled him to return to his original resolve. He could not now fairly and honestly say, "It is true evils do exist, but such arrangements have been made that all deficiencies and abuses will be immediately remedied." He was not satisfied with the arrangements as to the future. Therefore, he considered he could come to only one conclusion—that as he was unable to give the only answer that would stop inquiry, it was his duty not to remain a member of the government. Accordingly he had placed his resignation in the hands of Lord Aberdeen, which Her Majesty had been graciously pleased to accept.

This move on the part of Lord John Russell did not meet with general approval. It was considered as a desertion of his colleagues at a moment when a high-minded man would have done all in his power to rally round them and strengthen their cause. He might have resigned before, but under no circumstances should he have resigned whilst a vote of censure was pending. It was like a general quitting the staff on the eve of battle. "You will have the appearance," wrote Lord Palmerston to him when informed of Lord John's intention, "of having remained in office, aiding in carrying on a system of which you disapprove until driven out by Roebuck's announced notice; and the government will have the appearance of self-condemnation by flying from a discussion which they dare not face; while as regards the country, the action of the executive will be paralyzed for a time in a critical moment of a great war, with an impending negotiation, and

we shall exhibit to the world a melancholy spectacle of disorganization among our political men at home similar to that which has prevailed among our military men abroad." By most persons the course pursued by Lord John on this occasion was considered scheming and disloyal. It savoured, as Mr. Bentinck put it, amid the cheers of the House, "more of the foresight and adroitness of political scheming, than of the impulses of political patriotism."

This division in the cabinet tended all the more to convince public opinion as to the necessity of the inquiry demanded by Mr. Roebuck. That gentleman had for some time been in failing health, and when he rose to bring his motion before the House of Commons his strength only permitted him to do little more than introduce the subject to his audience. His debility at such a moment was unfortunate, for it was known that he had been assiduously studying all matters connected with the maladministration of the government, and his grasp of facts, coupled with his powers of invective and natural love of adverse criticism, promised an amusing and damaging speech. The little that he said was, however, much to the point. An army unparalleled in numbers and equipments had left our shores, and was now admitted to be in a condition which wrung the hearts of the country. He wished to ask two questions. What was the condition of the army before Sebastopol? How had that condition been brought about? The army had been reduced from 54,000 to 14,000, of whom only 5000 were now fit for duty. They were without food, clothes, shelter, or ammunition. What had become of the missing 40,000? This grave loss, and the miseries the troops had been called upon to endure, were solely due to the incapacity of the government. At Balaclava there were stores sufficient for twice the army, yet owing to blunder after blunder they were unable to be transported seven miles to our famished and half-naked troops. Mr. Roebuck was about to substantiate

his statements when he was seized with weakness, and had to confess, amid the sympathetic cheers of the House, his inability to proceed. He simply moved for a select committee, and then sat down.

The debate that ensued on the motion plainly showed the necessity of the inquiry demanded by Mr. Roebuck. Speaker after speaker rose up to prove how an army three times victorious had been left to be utterly destroyed by those who should have warmly supported it. It was told how men marched against the enemy without shoes, and almost in want of ammunition—how disgraceful was the state of the food doled out to the troops—how pestilential was the condition of the hospitals at Scutari and Constantinople—how frequently the wounded English were indebted to French mules and French ambulances—how limited was the medical staff—and how, throughout the expedition, the soldiers were subject to privations which ordinary skill and prescience could have prevented. "We accuse you," cried Sir Bulwer Lytton, addressing the Treasury bench, "of this—that you entered, not indeed hastily, but with long deliberation, with ample time for forethought if not for preparation, into the most arduous enterprise this generation has witnessed, in the most utter ignorance of the power and resources of the enemy you were to encounter, the nature of the climate you were to brave, of the country you were to enter, and of the supplies which your army should receive."

It was in vain that Mr. Gladstone endeavoured to throw his shield over his colleagues. Defence against such glaring shortcomings was impossible. The member for the University of Oxford contended that the state of the army had been greatly misrepresented. The distress had been much exaggerated. The war department did not deserve the reproaches that had been cast upon it. Mistakes, it was true, had been made, but in the future they would be rectified—more huts, more clothing, more ammunition, more stores of all



kinds had recently been sent out, and the grievances complained of would certainly not arise again. The committee proposed to be appointed would work no useful purpose; it was impossible in principle and impracticable in action, and was merely the handle used for casting a vote of censure on ministers. For its adoption it had no precedent; between the Walcheren inquiry and the Sebastopol inquiry no comparison could be instituted, for the two expeditions were totally dissimilar. He protested against the motion of Mr. Roebuck as useless to the army, unconstitutional in its nature, and dangerous to the honour and the interests of the commons of England.

Mr. Disraeli succeeded Mr. Gladstone, and his speech (January 29, 1855), as was to be expected, was one of the most damaging that the cabinet had to listen to. He began by discussing the question of the similarity between the Crimean war and the Walcheren expedition. Mr. Gladstone had taken the instance of the inquiry into the Walcheren expedition, and had said, "You have urged upon us what is a false resemblance between the present state of affairs and that which existed at the time of the investigation into Walcheren; and I will show you points of difference which you cannot contest." He entirely agreed with the chancellor of the exchequer. There were points of difference between the present case and that of the inquiry into Walcheren. No minister of the crown, in the case of the Walcheren expedition, had come forward, as Lord John Russell had come forward, and said that the state of affairs in his mind demanded inquiry—that, with all the advantages of his official position and of his accumulated parliamentary experience, there was in that state of affairs something inexplicable to him. In the case of Walcheren, instead of the first minister of the crown in that House making such admissions, they had him urging the inexpediency of the course, and telling them that information was not required in many particu-

lars, and that in others it was inexpedient to give it. After all the arguments of the chancellor of the exchequer upon that parallel between the present circumstances and those which attended the inquiry into Walcheren, let them for a moment remember what were the circumstances which they had to consider, and let them take that broad and common sense view of them which the people of this country had for some time adopted.

"You do not deny," said Mr. Disraeli, "that a great army has perished in a distant country to which it has been sent. The chancellor of the exchequer says that the amount of our loss has been misrepresented and exaggerated. He says that it was an army of 54,000 men, or 56,000 men, and that there are 30,000 still bearing arms, and that only 24,000 or 26,000 therefore have perished. Is not that then, I ask, a subject worthy of inquiry? But the chancellor of the exchequer at the same time dilates upon the contradictory accounts which exist upon the subject. Well, then, is there not some ground for inquiry, when it is a question whether 20,000 or 30,000 British troops have disappeared; when the first minister of the crown in this House tells us, with the advantage of his official experience, that the causes of that loss are inexplicable to him, and when the chancellor of the exchequer tells us that the greatest misconceptions and misrepresentations exist upon the subject? I ask you, is not that a fair ground for inquiry into a subject so interesting to the people of this country? But, says the chancellor of the exchequer, still harping upon the instance of Walcheren, would you justify yourselves in the present case by having recourse to means and measures which in that instance might have been justified because the transactions to which they referred were concluded? But the chancellor of the exchequer has misconceived, or has for a moment forgotten, the nature of the motion of the hon. and learned member for Sheffield (Mr. Roebuck). The motion of the hon. and



learned gentleman is not to inquire into the conduct of the war; it is not a motion which requires us to call before us French and English witnesses, the authorities of rival armies, persons connected with different countries, and owning a different allegiance.

"The motion of the hon. and learned gentleman is to inquire into the condition of the army before Sebastopol, and whether that condition has been occasioned by the maladministration of the government departments connected with the army. Now, that is a simple issue; but I doubt whether it is an issue which can be raised and investigated at the conclusion of the war. Suppose that the present war were to last as long as the late war, could you at the end of twenty years pretend to inquire into the condition of the army 'now' before Sebastopol? It might be a legitimate course to postpone to the conclusion of the struggle the discussion of the principles and policy upon which it had been conducted; but the present question appears to me to be of an instant and urgent character, and which, if ever inquired into, can only be inquired into at this moment. Then the right hon. gentleman dwells upon the inevitable character of an investigation of this kind by parliament into the administration of those in office, and he says that it is a mockery whether before a select committee, or before a committee of the whole House—the investigation is a mockery, because, he says, that carrying the motion for inquiry is clearly a censure upon the government. But that was not the opinion of Sir Samuel Romilly in the debate upon the Walcheren expedition. I quote a name still remembered and respected by the Whig party. Sir Samuel Romilly, meeting an objection of this kind, said, 'If you lay down that doctrine, you may as well lay down the doctrine that a man is condemned because he is put upon his trial.'

"Well, we have now before us the motion of the hon. and learned member for Sheffield, to which there appear to be, so far as I can collect the course of the debate, three main

objections. The first objection is that of my hon. friend the member for West Norfolk (Mr. Bentinck) that it is a censure upon the commander of the forces in the Crimea. Now, if I thought that by any ingenuity the language of the motion could be construed into a censure upon the conduct of Lord Raglan, or of any general officer in the Crimea, I should be the last man who would vote for it, or who would in any way sanction it; but I cannot, I confess, in any way apply to it such an interpretation; and I declare, if I had written the motion myself, entertaining those feelings towards Lord Raglan to which I have referred, that I could not have devised language which I should have imagined would be less likely to be supposed to convey the slightest imputation against the noble lord. The motion refers to the condition of the army, to its physical condition in that country. It wishes to inquire how far that condition, which we so much deplore, and which we believe to be so calamitous, has been occasioned by the conduct of any department of the government. How, therefore, can such an interpretation be placed upon it? Nor do I believe that it is one which can, for a moment, be entertained.

"The second objection to this motion is that it is of an unconstitutional and inconvenient character. That I have already sufficiently touched upon in adverting to the instance of Walcheren, which the chancellor of the exchequer has introduced to our notice to-night. I confess I do not think that any inconvenience would occur from any committee of the House of Commons visiting the heights of Sebastopol. We have to consider whether there shall be an inquiry into a specific subject—the condition of the army. Such an inquiry I believe to be perfectly constitutional, and, in my mind, it would not be inconvenient.

"But then, sir, comes the third and main objection to the motion of the hon. and learned member for Sheffield, and that is that it conveys, as the chancellor of the exchequer says, a censure upon the govern-



ment, or, as a colleague of his who preceded him stated, it implies a want of confidence in the administration. Now, let us endeavour to understand what is meant by the want of confidence which this motion is said to carry. I think we have a right to ask from the government, who are resisting the motion on the ground that it implies a want of confidence—I think we have a right to ask them this question—In what government does it imply a want of confidence? Does it imply a want of confidence in the administration which existed forty-eight hours ago? But the noble lord, late the first minister of the crown in this House (Lord John Russell), has quitted that government; and he has quitted it with a happy description of the feelings that prevailed among its members, and of the cordiality which animated their councils. I do not think, therefore, that the government will resist this motion on the ground that it is a want of confidence in the cabinet as it existed with the noble lord, the member for the city of London, as a member of it. Well, then, is it a declaration of want of confidence in the cabinet as it now exists? But we are told almost from the Treasury bench that whatever may be the effect of this motion—whether the government win or whether they lose—the event is to be followed by the abdication of all self-confidence on their own part. Do they then object to our voting a want of confidence in an administration which tells us that the moment it is over, whatever may be the result of the motion, they will consider themselves as no longer worthy the confidence of parliament? Well, then, is the objection to this motion that it implies a want of confidence in the government that is to be? That is a question we have a right to ask. Hard has been the fate of the House of Commons of late years. It has often been called upon to vote confidence in men with whose principles it was unacquainted, but it never has yet been called upon to vote confidence when it did not know either the principles

or the men. Well, then, when we are asked to pass a vote of confidence in the government, or to convey censure on the right hon. gentlemen opposite who have addressed us, I have always argued this case as if the present motion were an attack upon an individual member of the cabinet. The whole of this case has been argued by the government as if this were a personal attack upon the minister of war."

Mr. Disraeli then expressed his views as to the conduct of the government in selecting one of their members as deserving of a censure from which the rest were to be exempt. He objected to such a proceeding. He would not support a vote of censure upon the Duke of Newcastle which did not include the misconduct of his colleagues. He declined to be a party to any motion, the object of which was to pick out one member of the cabinet, and make him the scapegoat of a policy for which the whole of his colleagues were equally responsible. "The Duke of Newcastle," continued Mr. Disraeli, with his accustomed chivalrous generosity, "has done nothing for which his colleagues in the first place are not as responsible as himself. He was placed in a new office, with the most laborious duties; and at a period of such crisis and difficulty it peculiarly became the colleagues of the Duke of Newcastle, who must have been well aware of what he was doing, to have sustained him with their counsel and their sympathy. Least of all did it become them, when he was involved in a difficult position, as he is at present, to have quitted him; or, if they remained with him, to have risen in the House of Commons in order to decry his abilities and denounce his administration. I have no personal or political relations with the Duke of Newcastle. I need not remind the House that there are many reasons why that is not a very popular name on this side of the House. The Duke of Newcastle, as a politician, was trained and bred on the Conservative benches; he owed his intro-



duction to, and his success in public life, to this party; and, in our opinion, he conducted himself to this party, at a particular moment, with an acerbity of feeling and an ambiguity of conduct which, in his present forlorn condition, we can well afford to forget. But, sir, I protest against the convenient method which now is brought into a habit, of placing all these disasters upon either the maladministration of an individual or the ill-working of a system. Whatever may be the faults of that system, when worked by able men it has accomplished great things. I shall not enter into that branch of the question at this hour of the night, because I believe that the calamities which we all deplore have not been brought about only, or even principally, by faults of administration, but rather by an erroneous policy, for which certainly the cabinet must have been responsible, and not a solitary minister. I think the designs of the cabinet were hastily conceived. I think they attempted to accomplish them with inadequate means. I think that they were insufficiently advised of the nature of the enterprise in which they had embarked; and that they showed throughout the whole conception and management of their scheme a want of foresight, of firmness, of depth, of energy, and of all those resources which became a ministry who had embarked in an enterprise of such vast importance.

"Why, sir, the right hon. gentleman, the chancellor of the exchequer, has been this very evening referring to the Walcheren expedition. I remember those debates, and I am sure the noble lord the secretary of state opposite (Lord Palmerston) must also remember them. I am only a reader of those debates, but he was a listener. I remember it was pointed out by very able members of this House, that the government of that day were so ignorant that they had endeavoured by a *coup-de-main* to take one of the strongest fortresses in Europe, and were surprised to find, when about to accomplish that project, that the

fortress was defended more strongly than they had been led to believe. Substitute Sebastopol for Antwerp, and you have the history of the present expedition. But it was held to be a great misdemeanour on the part of that ministry to have undertaken a scheme which involved the siege of so strong a fortress, without having previously obtained ample and accurate information as to its defences. Why, we now hear from the ministers themselves that they were surprised at the resistance which had been experienced there, and the strength of the place before which our army under their directions have sat down. And then we are told the ill-administration of an individual minister easily accounts for the disastrous consequences which must necessarily result from such a gross want of statesmanlike sagacity."

Mr. Disraeli then criticised the taunts flung at his supporters for the "timidity" of their past opposition. He was not ashamed to say the Conservatives had exhibited a timid opposition to the government. That had not been because they were afraid of the government, or the consequences of their opposition if they undertook it; but because they were timid on account of the unparalleled disasters which they found accumulating over the country. They did so because the country was involved in war; and, whatever might be their opinion as to the impolicy which occasioned that war, they felt it their duty cordially to support the existing government in carrying on the war with vigour and efficiency. And if they now offered no longer a "timid opposition," it was because they found that, notwithstanding the support they gave the government, ministers had so mismanaged affairs that they had broken up from their own incapacity, and had placed the army of England in its perilous and calamitous condition.

He sneered at the boasted unanimity of the cabinet—a cabinet which did not know twenty-four hours before it was made public of the secession of one of its most important



members, and which saw colleague intriguing against colleague! He did not object to the government because it was composed of men who had acted in different parties, and had once been opposed to each other. A coalition cabinet was a compromise, but it was not necessarily a dishonourable compromise. "There is no stain," said Mr. Disraeli, "upon the character or honour of public men, or inconvenience to the public service, in statesmen, however they may have at one time differed, if they feel themselves justified in so doing, acting together in public life. All that the country requires of public men when they do so act together is, that they should *idem sentire de republicâ*—that upon all great questions they should entertain the same views, that in subjects of policy, whether foreign or domestic, they should be animated by the same convictions and the same sympathies. But with regard to the existing government—if it still be an existing government—all have seen that, during their career, it does not appear that upon any great question, whether domestic or external, they have been animated by the same spirit and sympathies. It is to that circumstance that we must attribute the fact that they have been so unsuccessful in carrying their measures, or prosecuting their policy. What has been the theory that seems to have kept together the various elements of the cabinet? The balance of power in the cabinet is the theory which both sides have attempted to support. That this is so, appears from their own admission. The late lord president is breaking up the cabinet, because from the first he anticipated injurious consequences in the conduct of the war from the want of experience and energy of the Duke of Newcastle, and yet he never objected to the office of minister of war being conferred on the Duke of Newcastle, because it gave him the means of saving the balance of power, and introducing as secretary for the colonies a supporter of his side. Thus, in the struggle to preserve the balance of

power, the noble lord was victorious; but he got bolder, and, not satisfied with his success, he invaded the principalities, and attempted to drive out the minister for war also. That expedition has, however, been no more successful than was that of the Russians some few months since, and what are the consequences?

"We are called on," concluded Mr. Disraeli, "to decide upon the motion of the hon. and learned member for Sheffield, which Her Majesty's ministers tell us they consider a vote of want of confidence. Well, sir, that motion is before the House, and we must vote upon it. The vote which I shall give is one which, I believe, will be the vote of the majority of the House. Personally, I care nothing for the consequences, but I feel called upon to decide on an issue which ministers have interpreted into a question of approbation or confidence. I care not by what name it is called, and I must decide according to the opinions I entertain. Sir, I have no confidence whatever in the existing government. I told them a year ago, when taunted for not asking the House of Commons to ratify that opinion of mine, that as they had no confidence in each other, a vote of want of confidence from this side of the House was surplusage. I ask the House of Commons to decide if twelve months have not proved that I was right in that assumption, although its accuracy was then questioned. What confidence has the noble lord, the late president of the council, in the minister for war? What confidence have this variety of ministers in each other's counsels? They stand before us confessedly as men who have not that union of feelings and of sympathy necessary to enable them successfully to conduct public affairs.

"The late president of the council, in scattering some compliments among the colleagues he was quitting, dilated upon the patience and ability with which the secretary of state for foreign affairs had conducted the duties of his department. I am not here to question those valuable



qualities or that patience; but I say that all the patience and all the ability with which the Earl of Clarendon may have administered, are completely lost by scenes like this, and when the ministers of this country have themselves revealed their weakness to foreign courts, all the ability and patience of that statesman cannot make up for the weakness which is known to prevail in the councils of England. Two years ago England was the leading power in Europe, but is there any man in this House who can pretend that she holds that position now? If this be the case—if we are called upon to decide whether the House of Commons has confidence in the ministry, when the debate is commenced by the secession of the most eminent member of the government, when affairs are in a calamitous state, and when we are told by the late lord president that the conduct of the war is intrusted to a minister who he thinks is unequal to the task—I ask the country, I ask this House, I ask the ministers themselves, whether they can complain that a member of the Opposition should give his vote according to the belief which he entertains that the affairs of the country are intrusted to a deplorable administration."

Mr. Disraeli fairly carried the House with him. On a division the ministers found themselves in a minority of 157. The prophecy of the leader of the Opposition had been fulfilled—coalition cabinets were never popular, and their reign had always been brief.

A ministerial interregnum now ensued. In the House of Lords the Earl of Aberdeen formally announced, that in consequence of the vote in the popular chamber, the ministers had resigned their office. His lordship considered the vote in the House of Commons unconstitutional; but at the same time neither he nor his colleagues had the slightest wish to avoid inquiry into their conduct. He thought the accounts from the Crimea had been much exaggerated, and he looked forward to the

future without dismay. He had nothing to reproach himself with in the past, and he dwelt with satisfaction upon the measures he had introduced and had been privileged to carry out. He concluded by assuring his peers that, whatever administration was formed, it should receive from him the support so urgently necessary in the actual crisis for any government, and that he hoped that such government, as soon as the real object of the war should have been attained, would lose no time in realizing the advantages of peace.

On the resignation of the Aberdeen cabinet, there were more than the usual complications as to its successor. Lord Derby was commanded by Her Majesty to form an administration; but his efforts were not attended with success. He offered Lord Palmerston a seat in the cabinet with the leadership of the House of Commons, which Mr. Disraeli had agreed to hand over to his rival; but the invitation was declined. Places in the new administration were also offered to Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Sidney Herbert; but with a like result. Aware that without extraneous support he could not constitute a ministry, Lord Derby had no alternative, under the circumstances, but to advise Her Majesty to ascertain if she could find a more efficient administration. Lord John Russell was next applied to; but his desertion of his colleagues was too recent to permit him to entertain any hope of success, and after a brief attempt he abandoned the task. Thus the appointment of Lord Palmerston as prime minister became inevitable. "A month ago," he writes to his brother, "if any man had asked me to say what was one of the most improbable events I should have said, my being prime minister. Aberdeen was there, Derby was head of one great party, John Russell of the other, and yet in about ten days' time they all gave way like straws before the wind; and so here am I writing to you from Downing Street as first lord of the treasury." Certain ministerial changes



took place, in order that the Palmerston cabinet should be "re-burnished." Lord John Russell was appointed envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary at the approaching congress at Vienna, to consider the terms of a peace. Lord Panmure, rough and hard, but not deficient in administrative ability, succeeded the Duke of Newcastle as secretary at war; Lord Granville occupied Lord John Russell's former post as president of the council; Lord Carlisle became lord-lieutenant of Ireland; the other places were filled as they had been under the rule of Lord Aberdeen. The one great change was that Lord Palmerston appeared as head of the cabinet in the stead of Lord Aberdeen.

The new prime minister, in explaining to the House of Commons the circumstances which had placed him in the position he then occupied, candidly avowed that one great difficulty stared him in the face. He strongly objected to the committee voted on Mr. Roebuck's motion. He deemed it unconstitutional and inefficient. He hoped that the House would at least consent to suspend its decision. He pledged himself as head of the government to do all in the matter that could be done. They all remembered the old case of that young monarch of England who, in meeting a body of discontented subjects, and finding that they had lost their leader, rode boldly up to them and exclaimed, "You have lost your leader, my friends; I will be your leader." So he, Lord Palmerston, would now say to the House of Commons, if they would agree not to appoint that committee, that the government would be their committee, and do what the House desired. The object of those who voted for the committee was to compel the government to such administrative improvements as would restore vigour to the service. Those improvements he had already introduced. The offices of secretary at war and war secretary of state were to be amalgamated. The Admiralty was about to establish a special board to superintend the transport

service. Three civil commissioners were to be despatched to the Crimea to examine into sanitary matters. The commissariat service was to be improved. The mission of Lord John Russell would also be fraught with important beneficial results. He trusted, therefore, that these reforms would satisfy the House, and supersede the necessity for organizing this select committee.

Mr. Disraeli rose up to express the views of the Opposition as to the request (February 16, 1855). He declined to accede to such demand. Lord Palmerston had given a list of the improvements he intended instituting. Admitting them to be good, what was to be thought of the predecessors of that reconstituted cabinet, who, to the last hour of their existence, denied the necessity of that reform, and opposed all inquiry into abuses now so openly admitted? "Why, sir," cried Mr. Disraeli, "let the House of Commons well consider what they are now asked to do. One of the finest armies that England ever sent forth mysteriously disappears—not by the sword of the enemy, for that we could endure, and could meet again and vanquish; but by means so mysterious, that a most experienced statesman, with all the advantage of a knowledge of the interior secrets of the cabinet, confessed, and announced to this House, that he could not penetrate the cause of or understand that mystery. The House of Commons must recollect that the position in which they were placed was not that of a public calamity having taken place, which suddenly urges and stimulates some independent member from a feeling of patriotism, although, perhaps, not of prudence, to call for inquiry, and to echo the voice of an anxious and agitated nation. No, sir. The first minister of the crown in this House, the man of whom, as a member, irrespective of all party politics, this House is most proud; the man who had previously been prime minister of England for a long period of years; the man whose qualities, whose sagacity, whose wisdom, whose statesmanlike mind have been just



eulogized by the first minister on the Treasury bench; a man of such qualities that, though he had intentionally destroyed his late colleagues, they have already employed him upon an august mission—this eminent person comes down to parliament and tells you that, although as a minister of the crown he cannot, with all the advantages of official experience, penetrate the mystery of the national calamity that has occurred, he yet thinks inquiry ought to be granted, as the plea for it is irresistible. Acting on that intimation, supported by that grave authority, echoing the universal opinion of the people of Great Britain, the House of Commons, not in haste, but after a debate which occupied days, with unusual numbers present, with its members hastening from every part of the country, by a majority almost unprecedented in the records of parliament, declared that an inquiry is the first duty of those, whoever they may be, who may be intrusted with the government of the country—that an inquiry by a committee of the House of Commons is the only mode in which the necessary improvements can be indicated; and then we are told to-night that the House of Commons is to stultify itself, that this House of Commons, which only ten days ago, under circumstances of such unmistakable conviction, and sanctioned by the high authority of the leader of the House, arrived at this solemn decision, are to recede from the ground which they then so solemnly affirmed, are to inflict a blow on their reputation and their public influence, such as, in my mind, a long period of years will not counteract!"

The mere vote for inquiry, laughed Mr. Disraeli, had already produced a long series of highly vaunted improvements; what might they, therefore, not obtain from the inquiry itself? He knew what was the course he should take. He should endeavour to support in every way the decision of the House, and what he believed was the strong and wholesome opinion of the country. "I am for inquiry," he con-

cluded. "I am for parliamentary inquiry into the condition of the army before Sebastopol, and into those branches of the administration which should have prevented the present lamentable condition of our troops." The House agreed with him, and resolved upon appointing Mr. Roebuck's committee.

Scarcely had the new ministry—or, as Mr. Disraeli christened it, "the late ministry and their present faithful representatives"—acceded to power when a second split in the cabinet ensued. A few days after his prayer to postpone the Sebastopol committee, Lord Palmerston came down to the House and announced that Mr. Gladstone, Sir James Graham, and Mr. Sidney Herbert had resigned their offices. The reasons given by these ex-ministers for the course they had adopted were perfectly sound and straightforward from their point of view. Under the rule of Lord Aberdeen these statesmen had warmly opposed the formation of the Sebastopol committee of inquiry. It was unconstitutional, without precedent, and cast grave reflections upon the administrative capacity of the cabinet. Since his accession to power, Lord Palmerston, in spite of his former opposition, had been induced to give his consent to the establishment of this committee. Therefore, those of his colleagues who disapproved of his proceedings had no other course before them but to send in their resignations. Sir James Graham objected to the committee being a secret one; he called it "a hole-and-corner committee;" he disapproved of many of the names of those who were to serve upon it; and, above all, he demurred to the doctrine that the demand for inquiry was irresistible—it was a most dangerous doctrine. Mr. Sidney Herbert regarded the motion of Mr. Roebuck as a vote of censure upon the government to which he belonged. He had nothing to conceal, and was ready to go before any committee. Still, if the country were determined that there should be a searching inquiry, a select committee was not the



best, most constitutional, or most efficient mode. As a vote of censure the motion was now valueless, and as an inquiry it would be a mere sham. He disapproved of the committee, and if it was resistible he would not be a party to it. Mr. Gladstone followed suit. He considered Lord Palmerston had made a fatal choice when he had permitted himself to give his consent to that committee. The business of the House of Commons was not to govern, but to call to account those who govern. The motion of Mr. Roebuck was without precedent. The committee was nugatory for the true purposes of inquiry; it was unconstitutional; it would lead to nothing but confusion and disturbance, increased disaster, shame at home, and weakness abroad. He had no objection to the conduct of the government departments being inquired into, provided such inquiry did not involve an examination by the House of Commons into the state of the army in the Crimea. The state of the army in the Crimea was not a fit subject for inquiry at the present moment, if that inquiry was to be conducted by a committee of the House. That committee was to be, not a committee of punishment, not a committee of remedy, but simply a committee of government. Such a proceeding was unconstitutional and without precedent. It was his duty to resist and protest against it; and that resistance he now made with great pain, but with a fixed determination which the public interests and his own conscience alike required.

In reply, Lord Palmerston said he should pass no criticism upon the course which his late colleagues had thought it their duty to adopt, as he was persuaded that they had acted upon a sincere and honest conviction. He had himself from the first objected to the committee, and his objection in some degree still remained; but it was impossible not to see that those who had affirmed the motion had acted upon two distinct motives. One party supported the motion because it thought an inquiry should take place, whilst

the other party favoured the motion because it considered it to be a vote of no confidence in the government. He therefore found himself, continued Lord Palmerston, in this position; he could not persuade the House to rescind its vote, nor could he undertake the task of forming an administration upon the chance of the House rescinding its vote, nor would he shrink from his post if it could not be persuaded to do so. An inquiry might doubtless be inconvenient; but there would be greater inconvenience, he thought, in the country presenting the spectacle of a government in abeyance at so critical a moment.

This explanation was commented upon at some length by Mr. Disraeli (February 24, 1855). He wished to know whether there was any government in existence at all. He had hoped to hear that the prime minister had been successful in forming an administration, but as yet that gratifying information had been withheld. Instead of that, the noble lord said, "So long as we possess the confidence of the House and the country, we intend to do our duty to Her Majesty, and to retain our places." But what Mr. Disraeli wanted to know was, who were "we." The moment, indeed, was one of great national peril. The emergency was granted by all. They were ready to extend to a government, with less reference to party feeling than at any other time, a just and generous support. But it did not appear to him to be a severe condition to be made by members of parliament that they should at least be acquainted with the names of Her Majesty's ministers—that they should have the satisfaction of knowing who were the patriots whom they were asked to support in the fulfilment of those onerous duties under circumstances so grave and so trying.

"I am bound to say," continued Mr. Disraeli, "that, in listening to the remarks of the noble lord with regard to his conduct respecting the nomination of this important committee, I find them not satisfactory. I must even say that I find them incoherent.



I did expect from the noble lord, at least, an answer to the argumentative speeches of his late right hon. colleagues. But the noble lord did not do so. I did expect the noble lord would to-night, at least, vindicate the policy which now seems to be the cardinal point of his administration. The noble lord opposed this committee when it was first proposed, and when it was supported by many hon. gentlemen on his own side of the House, and by the great bulk of those in Opposition. He opposed it in language the most strenuous, and in a spirit the most uncompromising. In consequence of the decision of the House of Commons, the government of which the noble lord was a member ceased to exist. It is unnecessary for me to refer to the circumstances which intervened between that vote and the day when the noble lord received the commission of Her Majesty to form an administration, and I make only one remark upon them, because the noble lord has fallen into a great inaccuracy in his reference to particulars with which he certainly ought to have been well acquainted—I allude to Lord Derby's attempts to form a government. Lord Derby never declined, as the noble lord has stated, the exalted duty which was offered to him because he could not form an administration, but he declined it solely because he could not form a strong administration; and, sir, I cannot admit that the noble lord, especially in the position in which he now finds himself, after ten days' experience of his more felicitous enterprise, has any right to pride himself upon his superiority over Lord Derby in that respect.

"But now let us look to the conduct of the noble lord with respect to this committee—his former opposition to it, his present support of it, and his dealings with his colleagues with respect to it. The noble lord, when a member of the late government, strenuously opposed the committee to inquire into the causes which have led to the present condition of our army before Sebastopol, and upon principle too. The

noble lord, since he has been first minister, since he succeeded in forming this strong administration, over which, only a week ago last Friday, he delivered so animated and fervent an eulogium—for it was only last Friday that he congratulated the country on possessing a ministry distinguished alike for administrative ability, political sagacity, and sufficient liberalism—the noble lord, when he was called upon to form this administration, formed it, if upon any principle, upon the principle of opposing this committee of the House of Commons to inquire into the condition of the army before Sebastopol. . . .

"Well," asked Mr. Disraeli, "what did the noble lord do even last Friday night? He again announces to the House that he will resist the committee; and on what ground does he found that resistance? Why, on the ground of its not being constitutional—no paltry ground, no slight ground, but the most powerful and effective objection that could possibly be stated. Now, sir, this does seem to me to be very strange that the noble lord, the first minister of the crown, should within the space of one short—"one little"—week, be prepared to do that which a week ago he deemed unconstitutional. And for what reason, I ask? Simply because he is determined to remain, he says, minister of the crown, as no other person, on his own showing, could form a strong ministry. I imagine there are many persons who could form a ministry as strong, at least, as that of the noble lord. The noble lord votes against the committee—he speaks against it—he absolutely forms his cabinet on the basis of opposing this committee; and, before a week has passed away, we find the noble lord rising in his place, staking the existence of his government on carrying that committee, and not urging one single reason in favour of that committee being appointed, or offering the slightest argument in support of this sudden and extraordinary change in his policy. After having listened for hours to arguments which I think are answerable, to precedents



with which, I think, the noble lord might have grappled, to a discussion which I supposed the leader of the House of Commons would have condescended to meet at least in fair debate, the noble lord changes all his opinions—the opinions which, only a week ago, he himself described as unconstitutional, he accepts; he not only accepts them, but he makes them the basis of his government. And this is the man whose firmness, consistency, and energy are to save the country!

"I do the noble lord injustice. The noble lord did give a reason for granting this committee. The noble lord has found out since last Friday that there is a strong public opinion in the country upon the subject of appointing this committee to inquire into the condition of the army before Sebastopol, and into the causes that have produced that condition. He has found out that there is such an almost irresistible feeling in the country, that no ministry would be justified in opposing it. Why, sir, what a fine observer must the noble lord be of the nation's disposition—what an acute observer must he be of public opinion—how skilfully must he feel the pulse of the public mind, if it is only since last Friday that he has arrived at that conclusion!

"The discontent of the country for months, which resulted in the overwhelming majority which destroyed a government, never induced the noble lord to suppose that a committee like this was a great necessity. Called upon to fulfil the most responsible duties which a man can be called upon to perform—called upon to form a government at a time when one would have thought that if a man could feel deeply or think profoundly he would have felt and thought deeply and profoundly—the noble lord is still unconscious that this committee of inquiry is still a necessity. The noble lord is still so ignorant of the public mind, and unmindful of that of which all are so conscious, that he

forms his government—not in oblivion, not in neglect, not in forgetfulness of that necessity—but absolutely in defiance of it. Administrative ability, of which we once heard so much, we know has vanished; but I thought at least political sagacity remained. Political sagacity was, I supposed, represented by the first minister of the crown; but after the experience of the noble lord's career, and the speech we have heard to-night, my hopes of his triumphant future are less glowing than I, at first, hoped it might have been. I have made these observations with reference to the change of opinion of the noble lord—I cannot say change of argument, for he offered us no reasons. I have not changed my mind with regard to the necessity of appointing this committee; although I have listened with the respect which they deserve to the speeches of the late colleagues of the noble lord—speeches which I certainly expected that the noble lord would have answered.

"It has been said that this is an unconstitutional course on the part of the House of Commons. I hardly care to enter into that question, because it has been very ably discussed; and I do not know that I should have adverted to it to-night, even after listening to the speeches of the right hon. gentlemen opposite, had it not been for an observation of the right hon. gentleman, the member for the University of Oxford. I have not come down to-night, sir, to enter into any debate upon the expediency or in expediency of granting this committee. I came down to-night by appointment, to hear three statements from three distinguished statesmen, and to listen, if necessary, to the answer, reply, comment, or criticism of the noble lord the first minister of the crown upon these statements. I certainly think the three right hon. gentlemen have taken a constitutional course in making their statements to the House. I am quite sure that the House would have felt greatly offended if they had not given a frank



exposition of their views; and I think it was a great mistake of the noble lord when having, more than a year ago, seceded from the government of Lord Aberdeen, he came back to office without a frank explanation to the House of Commons, and I believe I express the very general feeling of the House upon this subject. None of us have come here to enter into a discussion whether we should have the committee or not. That is a question which has been settled by an overwhelming majority, and I should like to see the minister who will, directly or indirectly, attempt to rescind it. But it is impossible not to notice some of the remarks of the right hon. gentlemen who have addressed us, one of which is brought to my mind by the observations of the right hon. gentleman, the member for the University of Oxford."

Mr. Disraeli then alluded to the sneer of Mr. Gladstone, that the Conservatives were basing their opposition upon precedents which were not favourable to their cause. He differed from Mr. Gladstone. The precedents in support of the action of the Conservative party were numerous and were convincing. "I do not want, however," said Mr. Disraeli, "to place this question upon precedents, numerous as they are. They are to be found in the time of Charles II., when an examination took place into the war with the Dutch and the conduct of the Duke of York; in the reigns of William III., Queen Anne, George II., George III., and during the Regency. I do not, however, place the question upon precedents. I say that, had there not been a precedent to meet this instance, it was the duty of the House of Commons to frame a precedent; because the circumstances are grave. A fine army disappears, and the chief minister of the crown in this House, and the right hon. gentlemen who have seceded from the government, tell us that, in possession of all the secrets of the cabinet, the causes of this disaster are to them inexplicable. If there had been no precedent, it was the

duty of the House of Commons, I maintain, under such circumstances, to have made a precedent; and, notwithstanding all his refined and sustained argumentation, the right hon. member for the University of Oxford may rely upon it that the people of England, not in moments of passion, but in the calmest periods of their existence, will always feel that with such an unparalleled disaster, inexplicable by the chief statesmen of the day, it was the first duty of their representatives to inquire into the cause of that disaster. 'But,' says the right hon. gentleman, 'leave it to the government. Why do you not leave it to the government? I am for inquiry,' says the right hon. gentleman, 'but not inquiry in this way, not inquiry by a committee of the House of Commons.' I am perfectly ready to admit that you might, under ordinary circumstances, have modes of inquiry more satisfactory than the one that has been proposed; but what does that come to? I admit that, under ordinary circumstances, a government might claim the duty and the privilege of inquiring into mal-administration, and of recommending, and even devising a remedy; but the fact is, that in the present state of affairs the country has no confidence in the government. It is a conviction that no sincere and efficient relief could be afforded by the administration, either the last or the present—I make this as a general, and not as a personal observation—that has made them feel that it was their own House of Commons from which alone they could obtain redress and satisfaction.

"Then the right hon. member for the University of Oxford takes up the list of the committee. He seems to be very familiar with the opinions of all the gentlemen upon it, and he says—and this was almost the most laboured part of his argument—quoting the opinion of a great authority, that nothing can be done effectually unless the individual who is employed is in favour of the task which he is engaged to fulfil. And it was considered by his



friends, certainly, as a very unanswerable argument; but did it not occur to him that it was in effect an argument against the constitution of every parliamentary committee that is called into existence every day upon every subject. Why, there is not a committee upon any subject which does not consist in many of its members of instruments that are not favourable to the subject-matter of inquiry; and, therefore, if the argument of the right hon. gentleman means anything, it is good against the whole system of parliamentary inquiry. Is the right hon. gentleman prepared to go so far as that? We have heard many sneers at parliament. We are told the constitution is in danger, because the noble lord at the head of the administration in the course of one week has changed the whole policy of his cabinet; but certain am I that if you wish to deal a blow against parliamentary authority, you can deal no more effective one than to impress on the country that the elements of a parliamentary committee are not adapted to the adequate fulfilment of their purpose. The noble lord opposite, instead of answering the arguments of his late colleagues respecting this committee, which a week ago he declared was unconstitutional, and on which to-night he has staked the existence of his government, has again favoured us with flattering visions of an impending peace.

"I am quite sure that, if the country believes that peace with honour can be secured by the noble lord, the ministry may count on the earnest support of this House. All I can say is, I hope the instructions which the noble lord has given to the noble lord the member for the City of London (Lord John Russell) are conceived in a more frank spirit, and in more intelligible language than the communications which he had on behalf of Lord Derby with the right hon. gentleman, and the understanding which he arrived at with his late colleagues as to the basis on which his government was formed. If the noble lord has gone to Vienna to be the promoter

of peace with a foregone conclusion in favour of war, that, I think, is not a satisfactory prospect for the country. I can, therefore, only hope that his instructions from the first minister of the crown have been couched in more familiar spirit, and expressed in more intelligible terms, than the conditions which he (Lord Palmerston) apparently made to be the basis of his government—a government which, after ten days, has experienced a disastrous blow at a time when the noble lord assures us that it is of the utmost importance that the country should feel that it was effectively and strongly governed, and when the noble lord, after circumstances so discouraging to the country, after a week nearly has elapsed since this unfortunate and untoward event has been proclaimed, does not find himself in a condition, at the conclusion of the parliamentary week, to feel, that by his exertions and all his combinations, he can assure the country that his sovereign possesses at this moment a complete body of responsible advisers."

The vacancies created by the retirement of these "three eminent statesmen" were filled up, and the Palmerston cabinet finally "re-burnished." Sir George Cornwall Lewis succeeded Mr. Gladstone as finance minister; Lord John Russell, in spite of his diplomatic appointment, accepted Mr. Sidney Herbert's late post at the colonial office; whilst Sir Charles Wood quitted the India office for the Admiralty. Other minor changes were also effected.

The committee requested by Mr. Roebuck had been formed; its sittings were frequent and its labours excited the deepest interest. Numerous witnesses were examined, and their evidence plainly proved the incapacity and misgovernment of the Aberdeen administration. The Duke of Cambridge himself declared that, while a cabinet minister was assuring the House of Commons that the number of men fit for duty amounted to 30,000, the real number was only 12,000; that the forces were short of food, short of clothing, and ill supplied



with all the necessities that were required for a severe campaign. In the middle of the following June the committee presented its report. It concluded with this grave charge against the coalition cabinet:—"Your committee report that the sufferings of the army resulted mainly from the circumstances under which the expedition to the Crimea was undertaken and executed. The administration which ordered that expedition had no adequate information as to the amount of forces in the Crimea. They were not acquainted with the strength of the fortress to be attacked, or with the resources of the country to be invaded. They hoped and expected the expedition to be immediately successful; and as they did not foresee the probability of a protracted struggle, they made no provision for a winter campaign. The patience and fortitude of the army demand the admiration of the nation on whose behalf they have fought, bled, and suffered. Their heroic valour, and equally heroic patience under sufferings and privations, have given them claims on the country which will doubtless be gratefully acknowledged. Your committee will now close their report with a hope that every British army may in future display the valour which this noble army has displayed, and that none may hereafter be exposed to such sufferings as have been recorded in these pages." Not without just grounds had Mr. Disraeli insisted on the establishment of the Sebastopol committee.

Whilst these ministerial arrangements and parliamentary labours were carried on, hopes had been held out of peace. If necessary the nation was prepared to pursue the hostilities against Russia to the very bitterest end; but at the same time, if a prospect of "peace with honour," as Mr. Disraeli then put it, should be held out, it would be none the less eagerly welcomed. Already the expense of the struggle had amounted to a formidable sum. Sir George Cornewall Lewis, the new chancellor of the exchequer, in his annual

financial statement showed that, though the income of the country had reached the amount of nearly £64,000,000, yet the cost of the present hostilities had caused an excess of expenditure above that sum of no less than £20,000,000. The deficiency he proposed to supply by additional taxation, and by a loan of £16,000,000. His views were at once acceded to; for the larger the supplies, the more effective would be the conduct of the war, and the sooner peace be obtained. For it was now evident that to trust to the efforts of diplomacy was misplaced confidence. The proceedings to obtain peace by negotiation had lamentably broken down; yet at their first commencement the prospect had been assuring. Sardinia, who was anxious to establish for herself a position in the councils of Europe, and to have an opportunity of venting her wrongs against Austria, had given in her adhesion to the cause of the allies, and had increased our strength. The sudden death of the Czar from a cold brought on by reckless exposure, and the accession of his son, the amiable and irresolute Alexander, had led men to hope that there would now be an end to the intrigues of Muscovite ambition. The congress had opened at Vienna, and Lord John Russell had been intrusted with the welfare of England at its deliberations. Four points were to be specially considered—the condition of the Danubian Principalities; the free navigation of the Danube; the limits to be set to Russian supremacy in the Black Sea; and the independence of the Porte. The question as to Russian supremacy in the Euxine broke up the congress. The Czar declined to be controlled by the Western powers, and he most decidedly refused to have any restrictions placed upon his naval strength in the Black Sea. Lord John Russell returned home to explain matters, and to lay before the public how his diplomatic counsels had served the interests of his country.

This explanation was precisely what the nation wanted, but could not obtain. The congress, it was said, had failed, and yet



not failed; it was not closed, but only suspended. Papers were asked for, but could not at present be had. Excuse after excuse was invented to stave off inquiry till ministerial imagination was almost exhausted. If diplomacy had not failed, why were hostilities to be at once resumed? If the congress at Vienna had collapsed, why was not the House of Commons put in possession of the facts? Why this ambiguity and confusion? Mr. Disraeli determined to force the government to give an answer to these questions. He rose (May 24, 1855) to bring forward the following motion:—

“That this House cannot adjourn for the recess without expressing its dissatisfaction with the ambiguous language and uncertain conduct of Her Majesty’s government in reference to the great question of peace or war; and that under these circumstances, this House feels it a duty to declare that it will continue to give every support to Her Majesty in the prosecution of the war until Her Majesty shall, in conjunction with her allies, obtain for this country a safe and honourable peace.”

Mr. Disraeli commenced his speech by explaining the reasons which had led him to frame this motion. He considered the conduct of the government had been most uncertain, and their language most ambiguous, with respect to the question of peace or war; they had shelved the resolutions of Mr. Milner Gibson and Mr. Layard, which, if freely discussed, would have elucidated matters;\* the country was most anxious as to the future policy of ministers, and therefore under the circumstances, he, Mr. Disraeli, did not feel himself justified in allowing the Whitsuntide holidays to intervene without the government being afforded an opportunity of declaring how they intended to deal with the important interests intrusted to them at that grave

moment. The circumstances to which he was about to call the attention of the House would require no great exercise of memory to command. He was not going to ask them to travel back to the passage of the Pruth, or to the declaration of war. His criticism would refer solely to public transactions of recent date. His canvas was so small that he should commence with the installation in office of the prime minister. Glorious epoch for the country! One could not but remember the triumphant cheers which announced that the crown of parliamentary laurel encircled that “reverend brow.” There was a minister at last who would vindicate the honour of the country; there was a minister at last who would carry on the war like Chatham, and who would maintain his principles in that House like Pitt; there was a man backed by an enthusiastic people to redeem a fallen state! And how had those hopes been realized? When the first fervour was a little past, when men began, as it were, to cease to feel and to commence to think, Sir James Graham—“he having just left the cabinet, and his seat, although filled by a not unworthy successor, being still warm with his ample presence”—addressed an inquiry to the first minister of the crown, and asked whether “there was to be any change in the principles upon which the foreign policy of the new administration was to be conducted, whether the policy recommended and followed by Lord Aberdeen was to be adopted, whether, above all things, there was to be any change in the terms and conditions which our plenipotentiary was to insist upon at the conference of Vienna?” To these questions Lord Palmerston replied, “On the contrary our principles are the same; our policy is entirely identified with the policy of Lord Aberdeen; no difference has been dreamed of for a moment with regard to the conditions upon which peace is to be sought for at the Vienna conference.”

And so Lord John Russell was sent to the congress as the representative of the policy of Lord Aberdeen; he had now

\* Mr. Gibson, as a member of the peace party, had made a motion condemning the government for lack of zeal in their endeavour to terminate hostilities; on the other hand, Mr. Layard proposed a resolution, which had for its object to compel the government to demand more exacting terms from Russia.



returned frustrated, he had returned bootless from the conference. "The appointment of the plenipotentiary," remarked Mr. Disraeli after his grave, caustic fashion, "did not at the first blush appear to be a happy one. The noble lord, the member for London, is so distinguished that I find it difficult to fix upon any subject, or upon any part of his life, in which he has not rendered himself remarkable; but I know nothing by which the noble lord has been more distinguished of late than by his denunciations of the power and the ambition of Russia. It is to the noble lord that I think may be mainly attributed—and in his various career his patriotism may be sustained and rewarded by the recollection—the passion of this great country for a decisive struggle with the colossal energies of the Russian empire. The noble lord, then occupying an eminent post—one more eminent, I am sorry to say, than that which he now occupies—addressed, as the leader of the House of Commons, not only fervid but inflammatory harangues to the parliament and people of England, the object of which was to show that war with Russia was the duty of the country, and that it ought to be carried on in no hesitating spirit, but ought to be undertaken by us with a determination of realizing considerable results. . . . I am obliged to refer to these circumstances in order to show the character and the antecedents of the noble lord, who was appointed our plenipotentiary to obtain peace. . . . Well, I have shown that the noble lord, who was selected for a plenipotentiary to obtain peace, was unquestionably an advocate of war, and of war on a great scale. It is of infinite importance when we have to investigate the conduct of the noble lord at this emergency, that we should clearly comprehend what were the antecedents of the noble lord and his qualifications for the office that I think he rashly undertook.

"The House will remember that it is only forty-eight hours since the first

minister of the crown said, that although these negotiations had been unsuccessful, they had been conducted with consummate ability. The noble lord (Palmerston) nods his head. I accept that ceremony as if the noble lord threw down his glove, and I call upon the House of Commons, without respect to party, to give a verdict upon the conduct of our plenipotentiary at Vienna. Do not let it be said that I am making comments upon the conduct of the noble lord because I am a member of a different political party, and that this is a party move. If I show that the noble lord was incompetent for the office that he fatally accepted, if I show that his conduct at those conferences led to consequences prejudicial to the public weal, it is my duty to bring these things forward. It was not enough that the noble lord made the speeches to which I have referred, but he, the plenipotentiary of peace, distinguished himself in this House by the high tone he assumed with regard to Russia and the rulers of Russia; and although then the first minister of state in this House, he did not hesitate to denounce the conduct of the emperor and his ministers as false and fraudulent. The noble lord did more. As the season advanced, as the noble lord's blood grew more warm, in a moment of excitement (it was in the month of July) the noble lord revealed the secret policy of the profound cabinet of which he was a member to the House of Commons; and we then obtained the authoritative information that war was to be carried on, and peace obtained in no less a manner than by the conquest of provinces, and the destruction of that stronghold that threw its frowning shadows over the waters of the Black Sea. The noble lord made an explanation afterwards of the words he used; but, as has been well observed, 'apologies only account for that which they do not alter.'

"When the noble lord thus announced the invasion of the Crimea and the destruction of Sebastopol, I for one said, that I had listened to that statement with dismay.



These," sneered the speaker, "were the qualifications of the plenipotentiary of peace, whose selection did so much credit to the judgment of the first minister, who, called to power by the enthusiasm of the people, and determined to put the right man in the right place, sends a minister to negotiate peace who had proclaimed an internecine war. But these were not all the qualifications of the noble lord. It was not enough that he had distinguished himself by addressing inflammatory harangues to the House of Commons. It was not enough that he had denounced the conduct of the Emperor of Russia and his ministers as false and fraudulent. It was not enough that, in a moment of outrageous and fatal indiscretion he revealed, as one might say, the coming disasters of his country. The noble lord signalized himself by another exploit before he went to make peace for his country. The noble lord destroyed a cabinet. He tripped up the prime minister because he was not earnest enough in prosecuting the war. These were the antecedents, these the qualifications, of the minister plenipotentiary to whom was consigned the fulfilment of the most important duties that have ever been delegated to a subject of the crown since the great congress of Vienna. This was the dove sent out to the troubled waters of Europe.

"It has been said of the noble lord—I think very unjustly—by a high, although anonymous authority, that the noble lord was not qualified for the post of plenipotentiary; in the first place, because he was not an eminent diplomatist; and secondly, because he did not take that leading position at the moment in this country which might have compensated for his want of diplomatic experience in the opinion of the Russian court. That was, I think, unjust, because I shall show that the noble lord has had a great, though not lengthened experience of diplomatic affairs. He was once at the head of the diplomatic body of this country, and in that capacity performed feats of no mean charac-

ter, which greatly influenced subsequent events, and are at this moment influencing the fortunes of this country; and although it is quite true, that having held this office when the noble lord was called upon by his sovereign to form a government, he could only find one gentleman to serve under him, and, strange to say, that gentleman, the present first minister; and although the noble lord, with his great position, and with all his genius, which I admire, finds himself in the agreeable predicament of twice filling a subordinate position in two administrations, which are Whig administrations, still that noble lord is the leader of the great Whig party—that small company," said Mr. Disraeli, ever consistent in his dislike to the governing families, "of great families who ever rule this country when in power, in defiance of our free aristocratic settlement, by the principles of an oligarchy masked in the language of a democracy—and therefore the noble lord, whatever office he may fill, will always be a very considerable man. Let me, then, call the attention of the House to a great event in the career of the noble lord—the key-note of the transactions which occurred when the noble lord was chief of the diplomacy of the country."

Mr. Disraeli then passed in review those "secret communications" between the government of England and the Emperor of Russia, during which Lord John Russell wrote his confidential despatch to Sir Hamilton Seymour, in which he made the notorious admission of acknowledging the protectorate of Russia over the Christian subjects of the Porte—a protectorate which he said was "prescribed by duty and sanctioned by treaty." It had been stated that the erroneous interpretation of the treaty of Kainardji had been the principal cause of the war. By whom, asked Mr. Disraeli, was that erroneous interpretation made? by the noble lord or by the Emperor of Russia? "If by the Emperor of Russia," cried the critic, "it was assented to by the minister of England. What right have we to interfere in this quarrel when the united wisdom of all



these statesmen has found out that 'the erroneous interpretation of the treaty of Kainardji has been the principal cause of the war, and the erroneous interpreter is sitting before me?' They were only at the commencement," predicted Mr. Disraeli, "of the extraordinary mistakes, the fatal admissions, the disgraceful demeanour of the noble lord who, they had been told, had displayed 'consummate ability though unsuccessful.' Lord John had been sent to Vienna for one object, and as to that one object he had most egregiously blundered. They had heard much as to the 'Four Points,' but with regard to the first two points there had been no difficulty. All had gone on swimmingly till the third point had been reached. Then came the discussion; and then it was that Lord John was expected, among others, to do battle for the admission of the Turkish empire into the European confederation, and to decide upon the manner in which the preponderance of Russia in the Black Sea should cease to exist. And how did their envoy behave? He rose up and declared that 'the only admissible conditions of peace would be those which, being the most in harmony with the honour of Russia, should at the same time be sufficient for the security of Europe, and for preventing a return of complications such as that the settlement of which is now in question.' No wonder Count Nesselrode considered that declaration as '*une definition fort remarquable!*' Who made the noble lord the judge of the honour of Russia? The noble lord had to think of the honour and interests of his own country. After that '*definition fort remarquable,*' Russia naturally declined to take the initiative offered them in the negotiations—she thought the allies would make proposals more agreeable in spirit than the Russians themselves. And what were the terms offered to Russia? They were most humiliating, and supported by the most infelicitous precedent; Lord John had appealed to the treaty of Utrecht, and the destruction of the fortifications of Dunkirk.

"Now," inquired Mr. Disraeli, "under what circumstances were the treaty of Utrecht and the negotiations for the destruction of the fortifications of Dunkirk made? After a series of splendid victories achieved by the arms of Marlborough and Eugene—after a series of the most humiliating reverses on the part of a once great king—at the end of a long reign when her resources were exhausted—France, high-spirited France, submitted to the greatest humiliation that her history records. And this is the precedent which is produced by the noble lord, who commences with an admission which makes the honour of Russia an essential qualification in any conditions of peace that may be made." Lord John Russell had placed the possibility of peace by negotiation almost out of the question by his conduct at Vienna. The admission with regard to the honour of Russia was the real cause why the negotiations were broken off, and a knot tied that diplomacy could not loose. "I think the noble lord," summed up Mr. Disraeli, "instead of showing great ability in the conduct of these negotiations, has committed every blunder which a negotiator could possibly accomplish. I think he made fatal admissions at the commencement, and that he had recourse to dangerous illustrations to support his position. I think he dealt with the wrong part of his material first; and that he has so managed the really important element, that so far as negotiation is concerned it is my opinion diplomacy can no longer solve the knot. The noble lord has proceeded in these conferences at Vienna in the same manner in which he proceeded as secretary of state for Foreign Affairs with reference to the confidential communications of Russia. He met them by a diplomatic and historical move conjoined; and guided by history, he has made a diplomatic mistake."

And now at last, exclaimed the speaker, the protocols so anxiously looked for had been laid upon the table. Yet what mean-



ing did they convey? The language of the plenipotentiary seemed to be as ambiguous as his conduct was uncertain in the management of the negotiation, for exactly opposite conclusions had been drawn by different parties in that House from his proceedings. One member thought the negotiations authorized peace; another thought they necessarily concluded in war. The Conservatives were, therefore, extremely anxious to obtain the opinion of the government upon the question, so that the country, now in a state of great perplexity and some discontent, might be guided in their opinions by ministers. What was the position of the country? Was there to be peace, or was there to be war? On what conditions were they to have peace? In what spirit was the war to be carried on? Had the conference concluded its labours, or was it still sitting? Lord Palmerston said one thing, Lord Granville another; which were they to believe? These questions Mr. Disraeli desired to be answered. He was against the principle of "leaving the door open." They should shut the door, and let those who wanted to come in knock at the door, and then endeavour to secure a safe and honourable peace. It was impossible to carry on at one and the same time an aggressive war and a protective policy.

"I deny," cried Mr. Disraeli, "that you can keep up the spirit of the nation in a struggle such as that which we carried on with Napoleon, and such as that which we have to carry on with the Emperor of Russia, if you are perpetually impressing on the country that peace is impending, and if you are perpetually showing the people that the point of difference between ourselves and our opponents is after all, comparatively speaking, of a petty character. Men will endure great sacrifices, if they think they are encountering an enemy of colossal power and resources. A nation will not count the sacrifices which it makes, if it supposes that it is engaged in a struggle for its fame, its influence, and its existence. But when you come to a doubled and

tripled income tax; when you come to draw men away from their homes for military service; when you darken the hearths of England with ensanguined calamities; when you do all this, men must not be told that this is merely a question whether the Emperor of Russia shall have four frigates or eight." Such a course, commented the leader of the Opposition, impressed the public mind with the idea that the country was engaged in a struggle for an object unworthy of the sacrifice. Mr. Disraeli then concluded by begging the House to support his motion, and to put an end to that vicious double system, by which they had so long carried on an aggressive war and a protective diplomacy. The time for negotiation was past, and an end should now be put to the distrust that everywhere prevailed. If diplomacy could bring them an honourable peace, he would cling to its efforts; but he was convinced that further negotiations, instead of securing peace, would only aggravate the dangers and distresses of war. The issue before the House was a simple one, and it was this—"Will you put an end to this diplomatic subterfuge and this ministerial trifling?"

Upon this motion there followed the most important debate of the session. Sir Francis Baring, in an amendment which Mr. Disraeli criticised as having been "cribbed from my thoughts and clothed in my language," moved "That this House, having seen with regret that the conferences at Vienna have not led to a termination of hostilities, feels it to be a duty to declare that it will continue to give every support to Her Majesty in the prosecution of the war, until Her Majesty shall, in conjunction with her allies, obtain for this country a safe and honourable peace." This amendment was in its turn amended by Sir William Heathcote, who proposed to insert after "hostilities" the words, "and still cherishing a desire that the communications in progress may arrive at a successful issue." Speakers on both sides freely aired their eloquence, either in favour of the motion or



the amendments, and showed how eager they were to have the question fully discussed. Mr. Gladstone supported the alteration proposed by Sir William Heathcote. He did not consider that the opportunity should be lost. A war just in its origin would be unjust, if prosecuted after its object had been obtained. The only one of the four points not now settled was the third, and the difference arose, not upon its principle, but upon the mode of its application; so that the quarrel was merely as to the mode of construing a moiety of the third point. Russia had receded from her pretences; she had gone far to put herself in the right, and in war as well as in peace the great object should be to be in the right. All the terms the allied powers had demanded had been substantially conceded; and if it was not for terms they fought, but for military success, such an object was immoral, inhuman, and unchristian.

Lord John Russell, who had been so severely criticised, entered upon an elaborate defence of his conduct. He had never, he said, been very sanguine as to the success that would attend upon these negotiations. He had no habits of diplomacy; and being more accustomed to parliamentary life than to intercourse with those who carry on negotiations, he felt that he was not the fittest person to undertake the duty of plenipotentiary. But he had been requested to perform the mission by Lord Clarendon, and he had obeyed. The limitation of the naval power of Russia was a most difficult and delicate question. The Russian preponderance in the Black Sea was, next to the Russian occupation of the Principalities, the greatest danger with which Turkey was threatened. Lord John then drew a terrible picture of the enormous power of Russia, and of the influence she had gained over Turkey. He justified the declaration which he had made at the conference respecting the conditions to be attached to the third point. He considered that the proposition brought forward should not only be consistent with

the security of Europe, but also compatible with the honour of Russia. Yet in spite of this feeling, he was of opinion that a limitation of the Russian naval power in the Black Sea was indispensable to the security of Constantinople, and the rejection by Russia of that demand was a sure indication of her designs upon that city. Notwithstanding the harsh judgment of Mr. Disraeli, he had nothing to reproach himself with as to his conduct of the recent negotiations, and he did not think the Conservative party would add to its fame or reputation by the course it was now taking. Mr. Lowe, in one of his hard, clear speeches, avoiding all irrelevant matter, proposed a third amendment. He sneered at the Conservatives for keeping their patriotism for their speeches, and putting their party spirit into their motions. He desired to raise the question that really ought to be discussed. The course proposed by Mr. Disraeli and Sir Francis Baring would be discreditable for the House to pursue. He proposed a third amendment—"That this House, having seen with regret, owing to the refusal of Russia to restrict the strength of her navy in the Black Sea, that the conferences at Vienna have not led to a termination of hostilities, feels it to be a duty to declare that the means of coming to an agreement on the third basis of negotiation being by that refusal exhausted, it will continue to give every support to Her Majesty in the prosecution of the war, until Her Majesty shall, in conjunction with her allies, obtain for this country a safe and honourable peace." He took his stand upon the ground agreed to by Russia herself. She had admitted that her preponderance in the Black Sea ought to be put an end to; yet, having made that admission, she declined to limit her naval power. In the opinion of Mr. Lowe, the putting an end to Russian preponderance in the Black Sea, and the limitation of her naval power, were one and the same thing, being but two forms of the same expression. Therefore, there being no means of comply-



ing with the third basis of negotiation, except by limiting the Russian naval power, and that being refused, the conclusion was that that basis was exhausted. If so, it would be beneath the dignity of England to continue the negotiations.

Lord Palmerston then summed up the discussion. He denied that the conduct of ministers had been uncertain or their language ambiguous. Mr. Gladstone by his speech objected to the war, to the expedition to the Crimea, and to the terms proposed at the conferences; and yet the member for the University of Oxford had been a party to all those measures! It was, however, now superfluous to argue the justice and necessity of the war, which was almost universally admitted, and the country was ready to carry it on with energy and vigour. He commented upon the futility of the plans suggested by the Russian plenipotentiaries. There was no pretence for Russia declining to give to Europe a pledge of her good disposition by consenting to a limitation of her naval power in the Black Sea. She had refused the fair conditions offered her, and since England was fully prepared, the war must be carried on. He felt confident that the nation was in earnest as to the war in which they were engaged, and that the people of England would give their support to any government that would honestly and with energy execute the will of the British nation, while they would never sanction any ministry which would abandon its allies and desert that policy, which had been pursued up to that moment in accordance with the will and feelings of the country. He looked with indifference upon the result of the motion. He felt that in whatever hands the government might be placed, the will of the people must and should be obeyed. That will signified that England, having engaged in a just and necessary war, it must and should succeed. He was confident that, although it might be the duty of the government to exhaust the means of negotiation as far as they could be pursued with honour, the people

would never give their support to any administration that should, in expectation of the success of those negotiations, abandon the performance of its duty in the preparation of the means for war.

These were brave words, and they were fully commented upon by Mr. Disraeli (May 25, 1855) in his reply, before the sense of the House was taken upon his motion. If he had felt, he said, any necessity of calling evidence to vindicate the propriety of the conduct which he had pursued, and the justice and policy of the course which he had taken, it would be the speech of Lord Palmerston, who had positively warned the House, in the way of the fulfilment of his duty to carry on the war with effect, not to be influenced by any hope or prospect of any further negotiation for peace. Was that the minister, exclaimed Mr. Disraeli, who had evaded every inquiry? Was that the minister who to every question that had been urged upon him, had used every artifice to prevent the House of Commons from obtaining a single expression which would give an indication of the policy of the government, or of the resolution at which they had arrived, on the great question of peace or war? Was that the minister who in every instance had deprecated that inquiry should be made upon the subject, on the ground that even inquiry might interfere with the course of that delicate negotiation that was pending? This change of front, continued Mr. Disraeli triumphantly, had fully justified the motion he had brought forward. Every amendment that had been proposed only went further to sanction the course the Opposition had taken. They had had a full discussion, and every possible opinion had been expressed on the momentous question before them. Whatever might be the fate of his motion, it had at least elicited this good—that at last the country had heard something definite from the government.

"The noble lord," said Mr. Disraeli, referring to the premier, "for some



time, in addressing the House on the subject of the war, has pursued his customary habit of making no allusion to the future; scrupulously shrinking from any expression of his own views, but carefully enumerating all the more the incidents of the past. 'We have a fleet,' says the noble lord, 'in the Baltic, we have a fleet in the Black Sea, we have a medical department, a commissariat staff, and many other establishments, of which we may be proud.' The noble lord reminds me always in this elaborate catalogue which he gives us so frequently, of the *parvenu* in one of Foote's farces, who used to recommend himself to his mistress' good graces by enumerating his possessions. 'I have a house in the country, a house in town, a gallery of pictures, a fine cellar of wines,' and so on. In that way the noble lord for some time has been in the habit of informing us that he has a fleet in the Black Sea and a fleet in the Baltic, that he has a Sardinian contingent to assist his army in the Crimea, that he has a medical department established on the best footing, and those various other things which he has so often recounted; but at last he has felt that the time was come when this was no longer sufficient, when he must speak explicitly respecting the intentions of the government on the question of peace or war." The noble lord, laughed the speaker, therefore, had at last made a declaration which he had refused to express on every other occasion. He had made a declaration perfectly inconsistent with all his previous declarations. The noble lord now stood forward as a war minister, who would be satisfied with nothing less than an achievement, the obtaining of which was perfectly inconsistent with the negotiations which he had been carrying on. Had not, therefore, the words of the motion as to the ambiguity of language and uncertainty of conduct been fully proved?

He was prepared, continued Mr. Disraeli, to maintain in every respect the propriety of his motion. It was not his duty to express the terms upon which he thought

peace ought to be obtained, or the objects for which the war ought to be prosecuted. The House of Commons had no right to interfere with the terms upon which peace or war ought to be proclaimed. Those were the just prerogatives of the crown, and not to be meddled with by the popular assembly.\* The motion he had drawn up was proper in its tone, loyal in its language, perfectly adapted to the contingency; and one that every member who wished to end this unsatisfactory state of things should support. "We were," explained Mr. Disraeli, "dissatisfied with the language and the proceedings of the government, especially with reference to recent negotiations and with the conduct of affairs as affecting the great question of peace or war. We were precluded from definitely expressing what we might consider the terms on which peace ought to be negotiated, or the objects for which the war ought to be pursued; and we wished to guard ourselves carefully from any interference with the exercise of the prerogative. Therefore, all we could do was to ask the House if we proved our case, to declare that there were ambiguous language and uncertain conduct on the part of Her Majesty's ministers, not vaguely and abstractedly, but with reference to the great question of peace or war; and if the House were of that opinion—which it would be, if it were to adopt the resolution—we asked it also, to show that there was no ambiguity

\* Upon this point Mr. Disraeli was in error, and a few nights afterwards he acknowledged his mistake (June 8, 1855). "Now, I believe," he said, referring to this assertion in his speech, "the best rule of life is never to give an opinion on any subject upon which you yourself have not expended study and research. I unfortunately on that occasion re-echoed an opinion which I had heard from the highest authorities in this House—some of whom are still with us, while others have left us—that it is an interference with the prerogative of the crown for the House in any way to express an opinion as to the terms upon which peace should be obtained, or the objects for which war should be urged. . . . I could easily show that nothing is more certain than that it is the privilege and the duty of the House of Commons upon all fitting occasions to advise Her Majesty as to the terms upon which she should negotiate peace, or the objects for which she should carry on war. It is one of those points which do not admit of doubt." Even so practised a statesman as Lord Palmerston laboured under a similar erroneous impression. He gave the same reason as Mr. Disraeli had given, as an excuse for refusing his assent to the amendment of Mr. Lowe.



in its language, no uncertainty in its conduct, but under the circumstances, in order to prevent any misconception on such a subject, to affirm that it was still determined to continue to support Her Majesty with all its means in the same spirit as when it first addressed the crown in answer to the gracious message of the sovereign announcing that war has been declared."

In conclusion Mr. Disraeli said that he had made out his case, and that the object for which he had been working had been attained. That object was to prevent the prosecution of war and the carrying on of negotiations simultaneously. He had been blamed for his personal attack upon Lord John Russell; yet his comments were perfectly in accordance with parliamentary etiquette. It was the province of the House of Commons to exercise a control over even the highest servants of the sovereign. If an ambassador took a course which was detrimental to the interests of his country, or had not the qualities necessary for a proper discharge of his duties, then it was incumbent on the House of Commons to bring the conduct of such person under consideration, and to ask the opinion of the House upon the subject. If it were true that Lord John Russell, when secretary of state, had acknowledged that Russia had the right, which she most certainly had not, of protectorate over the Christian subjects of the Porte; and if it were true that a false interpretation put upon certain treaties by that noble lord had been the principal cause of the war—was it not his, Mr. Disraeli's, duty to bring the matter before the House? "The noble lord says," concluded Mr. Disraeli, "I degraded the debate; but whatever I have done, I have done this—I have tried to prevent the noble lord from degrading the country."

The opinion of the House was, however, not in favour of Mr. Disraeli's motion; it considered such a motion as shutting the door to negotiation, and excluding the hope of an early and satisfactory peace. Many

also, who agreed with its suggestions, yet looked upon it as a motion of want of confidence, and were not prepared at that moment to cause a change of government. On a division the motion was rejected by 319 against 219.

The amendment of Sir Francis Baring now became a substantive motion, and the debate on the prosecution of the war still continued. The real question at issue was, however, whether the House ought or ought not to make peace upon the Russian proposal with regard to the Third Point. The debate lasted another four nights, and in the discussion that ensued every member of note took part. Mr. Milner Gibson was of opinion that all means of peace had not necessarily been exhausted, because Russia refused to limit the number of her ships. He called on the prime minister to state with frankness the definite objects of the war; and implored the House to pause before it sanctioned a motion that would perpetuate a war which might bring the most formidable disasters on the country. On the other hand, Sir William Molesworth declared that peace upon the Russian terms would be ignominious and dangerous—a confession of defeat covering the allied armies with shame and dishonour. Lord Elcho boldly avowed that the shortest and safest way to peace lay through the breach of Sebastopol, and that the most efficient negotiators would be found, not in the cabinet, but in the camp. Sir Bulwer Lytton, in the most eloquent speech delivered on this occasion, maintained that the object for which the war was begun—the independence and integrity of the Ottoman empire secured by guarantees—should be constantly kept in view. To sustain a protective war they could not limit themselves entirely to means purely defensive. It was true they could not crush Russia as Russia, but they could crush her attempts to be more than Russia. Mr. Cobden, in a bitter, mischievous speech, was in favour of peace at any price. Sir James Graham was desirous that the



negotiations should not be broken off; he considered that peace might yet be obtained by a settlement proposed at Vienna. Lord John Russell again asserted that unless Russia consented to reduce her naval force in the Euxine, the security of Turkey would never be assured. Mr. Roebuck hoped Lord Palmerston would maintain a firm, bold, straightforward spirit, cripple Russia, and keep what they had honestly acquired by English valour. To cripple Russia they must not consider her honour; and in crippling her they fought the battle of mankind. Mr. Sidney Herbert declared that peace was now necessary, since the objects for which the war had been waged had been gained. Mr. Bright, in his customary style of coarse invective, after severely commenting upon the conduct of Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston, "the authors of the war," did not consider the government was justified in breaking off the negotiations. Mr. Walpole denounced the ambiguous conduct and language of the cabinet, and called upon ministers to state the object of the war. There was a total difference between the terms of peace and the objects of the war, which ought to be the same at the end as at the beginning. He considered that the proposition offered to Russia for the reduction of her naval power in the Black Sea would be illusory as well as humiliating, and pregnant with future differences. It was false that the Conservatives were actuated by party motives, as was plainly apparent by their forbearance at the outset of the contest.

The debate was brought to an end by Mr. Disraeli (June 8, 1855). "I have heard in the course of this debate," he said, "which has now been unusually prolonged, many different characters of our discussion. I have heard that it is a discussion without an object; that it is a wearisome discussion; I have listened to gentlemen, who have apologized for prolonging a debate that was tedious—there was a moment even when this House

now so crowded seemed to tremble for its existence. Four days having now elapsed since the debate commenced, it becomes my duty to offer an impartial opinion upon the subject under our consideration. Somewhat unwillingly—almost unnecessarily—I had thought it would be, having expressed some opinion on the question that engages our attention very recently. But unnecessarily as I had hoped it would be for me to interfere in the matter, I am bound to express my conviction that since I have had the honour of sitting in this House I have never listened to a debate of more importance, the subject of which was of more transcendent interest, in the conduct of which greater abilities have been shown and in which a vaster issue has been at stake, which has thrown greater light upon public transactions, and has placed public men in a more intelligible position, than this debate which it has been convenient for some gentlemen to characterize as one of insignificance. My opinion is that it will be recognized by the country, not only in its immediate character, but also in its ultimate consequences, as one of the most important discussions ever originated and sustained in the House of Commons."

Mr. Disraeli then stated what the issue was before them, and referred to the motives which had induced him to propose his motion. He denied that such motion—which was intended as a vote of censure for a specific act—should have been considered as a vote of want of confidence, or to have carried with it the displacement of the ministry. Over and over again it had been decided that a vote of censure upon some specific conduct was no reason why a government should relinquish office.\* Mr. Disraeli then traced the pedigree of the different amendments. The amendment of Sir Francis Baring he considered a case of *felo de se*. That of Mr. Lowe was far more important.

\* The case of the Marquis of Londonderry, for instance. Lord Londonderry had been nominated, much to the disapproval of the House of Commons, ambassador at St. Petersburg. An address to the crown was moved against the appointment, yet the premier of that day did not resign.



It was in itself a complete and perfect proposition, and one of the most momentous ever laid before the House of Commons. It stated that, in consequence of Russia having refused to reduce the fleet in the Black Sea, the means of negotiation were exhausted, and therefore they were called upon to rally round the sovereign and support Her Majesty in the war. The question before them was, therefore, not an obscure and insignificant one; on the contrary, a more important proposition was never brought forward.

"Let me," said he gravely, "venture to impress upon the House the nature of the question which they are now called upon to investigate. There are very few of us who have been members of this House when England has been at war. We, with very rare exceptions, have only sat here when questions of a very different character have absorbed the public interest and exercised public intelligence. But remember, there is one vast difference between questions of domestic and questions of foreign policy. The power of a majority in the House of Commons is a great thing; it is an inestimable treasure to a minister; its influence (subject, no doubt, to certain conditions) is omnipotent so far as domestic questions are concerned. A minister may, by the aid of a parliamentary majority, support unjust laws, and may support a political system which a quarter of a century afterwards may, by the aid of another parliamentary majority, be condemned; the passions, the prejudices, and the party spirit that flourish in a free country may support and uphold him in the course he is taking. But when you come to foreign politics things are very different. Every step that you take is an irretrievable one, and the consequences of your conduct are immediate and palpable. A false step in such a case cannot be retraced; you cannot, as you do on domestic questions, rescind your policy, calculate the loss you have sustained by the unwise system you have pursued, and console yourselves by thinking

that for the future you will shun a policy proved to be injurious. If you make a mistake in your foreign affairs; if you enter into unwise treaties; if you conduct campaigns upon vicious principles; if the scope and tendency of your foreign system are founded upon want of information or false information, or are framed with no clear idea of what are your objects and your means of obtaining them, there is no majority in the House of Commons which can long uphold a government under such circumstances. A majority under such circumstances will not make a government strong, but will make this House weak. Therefore, I do intreat the House carefully to consider the course they are taking on this question, and to be sure before giving their votes that they are sanctioning sound principles, and that, when they think they are only supporting their political friends, they may not be injuring their country—that when they cheer over a majority, as they cheered the other evening, the day may not be coming, and that rapidly, when they will remember that cheer with confusion and shame."

Mr. Disraeli then stated the course he should take, and specified the reasons why he adopted such a course. He did not attach the value to the third point which certain members had placed upon it. In his opinion it was a proposition that ought never to have been made, and which, if carried out, would be essentially inefficient. The object of the government was to reduce the naval preponderance of Russia in the Black Sea. The object of the Conservative party at present was to check or, if possible, to destroy what was called the preponderance of Russia as against Turkey. The preponderance of Russia, as regarded Turkey in the political system, was not limited to the Black Sea. Of the three quarters from which Turkey might be menaced by Russia, the Black Sea was the one that was least to be dreaded. Turkey was assailable by Russia from the Danube, from Asia, and from the Black Sea. What was called the



preponderance of Russia equally pressed upon Turkey from the Danube and from Asia, as from the Euxine. The condition insisted upon by the government only pretended to meet the difficulties and dangers which might arise from Russian preponderance in the Black Sea. Yet it was impossible for Russia to be dangerously aggressive in the Black Sea. She had not the power of sending an army with the necessary cavalry, artillery, and means of transport from Sebastopol to any port on the Turkish coasts in the Euxine. All that Russia could do under any circumstances would be to throw troops on the coast, as she did in 1828, at Sizeboli and Bourgas; but the troops thus disembarked never moved, nor had they power to move. Undoubtedly to have command of the sea was a great advantage to Russia in any war with Turkey, but it was not an advantage which would ever be decisive as regards the results of war. France almost conquered the world, while England had command of the sea. The condition, therefore, which Lord John Russell had made the mainstay of his diplomacy at Vienna was inefficient.

It was also impolitic. He, Mr. Disraeli, had been blamed for condemning Lord John Russell's anxiety as to the honour of Russia. It had been said that the noble plenipotentiary had been quite justified in considering the honour of Russia in all the arrangements contemplated. Who denied it? It was not only the first principle in diplomacy, but in common life; for in ordinary affairs, when adjusting differences and making arrangements intended to be permanent, it was only common courtesy to consider the honour of the opposing party, and he should have greatly blamed the noble lord if in any scheme of negotiation he had failed in so great a duty. He, therefore, did not condemn Lord John for consulting the honour of Russia; but he blamed him for making the great and unnecessary admission, previously to the negotiations, that the honour of Russia

must be considered in any arrangements that might be made—thus giving Russia an excuse to avoid commencing negotiations herself and of answering every proposition, by alleging that her honour was concerned, of which Russia was the only judge. He referred to the admission, continued Mr. Disraeli, because he wished to impress on the House that, not only was the condition of the noble lord inefficient, but impolitic, because it was unnecessarily humiliating to Russia. Lord John Russell had apparently regulated the whole of his conduct in this affair by the treaty of Utrecht. Sebastopol was to be dismantled, as Dunkirk had been dismantled; but the course of the war not justifying these sanguine anticipations, the dismantling of Sebastopol took the more qualified shape of the limitation of the fleet. Yet what parallel was there between Russia under the Czar Alexander and France under Louis XIV.? The treaty of Utrecht secured a peace only wrung from Louis when the nation was utterly exhausted by the expenses of a ruinous war, and the spirit of the people completely broken. Was that a parallel which Lord John was justified in initiating, and which he quoted in vindication of his demand to Prince Gortchakoff? Was it wise to humiliate Russia by implying that she was in so pitiable a condition? On the contrary, was not such a demand most impolitic?

He next had to deal, said Mr. Disraeli, with the question of the preponderance of Russia as regards Turkey. It was no new phenomenon in their political experience. The history of Europe was the history of attempts to check and control the preponderance of great states over neighbouring weaker ones, in the independence of which Europe has had an interest. Louis XIV. had invaded the Netherlands, and Napoleon the Great had conquered the Netherlands, and yet at the present day the Netherlands were independent; and the preponderance of France, which for a century and a half was exerted upon that battlefield, had been baffled. The united



will of Europe had established the neutrality of Belgium, one of the battlefields of Europe. Switzerland was one of the battlefields of Europe, and its independence was menaced by the preponderance of Austria; but the congress of Vienna established the neutrality of Switzerland. Thus there were means by which the preponderance of a great power over a weaker might be controlled; and the question to consider was whether the project of the government was the best means of controlling the preponderance of Russia with respect to Turkey? What he complained of in the negotiations of the government was, continued Mr. Disraeli, that he saw no evidence of a recurrence to those means by which statesmen of great ability and unquestioned reputation had attempted to deal with difficulties similar to those with which the government had now grappled.

Mr. Disraeli then suggested the measures which should be adopted to curb the power of Russia. The neutrality of the Principalities should be established. By that course the frontier of Turkey on the Danube would be reduced; whilst Russia, should she attempt to invade Turkey on that side, would have to pass a large river, and then to enter on the fell and pestiferous steppes of the Dobrudscha, to pass the fortresses of Schumla and Varna on its left, and Silistria on its right. Such difficulties Russia would never be able to surmount. With regard to the Asiatic frontier nature was not so favourable to diplomacy, since there were no natural barriers; but would Lord John Russell pretend that it was impossible to establish artificial barriers? Why should not fortresses be erected at Erzeroum and Kars, and on other points of the Asiatic frontier, to be periodically inspected by English commissioners? In the event of peace it should also be stipulated that the fortresses on the eastern coast of the Black Sea should be destroyed. That was not a stipulation which would injure the pride of any nation, however great; yet it was

one which would render imperfect the military communications of Russia in those waters, and which would, more than any other condition that could be devised, consolidate the power of Turkey, and secure the possession of Constantinople to the Ottoman empire. These suggestions which he had advanced had been sanctioned by great men, and he thought them well worthy the attention of the House.

"I will not, however," concluded Mr. Disraeli, "pursue this theme, as many other opportunities will be afforded me for discussing it. What I have been anxious on the present occasion to do, when these crude schemes of the government are placed before us, and when we are told that peace cannot be effected because these inefficient and useless methods have not been successful at the conferences, is to show—first, that it is our duty to denounce such ineffectual propositions; and in the next place, to inform the minds of the people of this country on the subject, and to convince them that there are practical, sound, and solid means by which the great problem in modern politics can be solved. The right hon. baronet, the member for Carlisle (Sir James Graham), told us the other night that the new generation of statesmen should occupy their minds in considering what was to occur when the Turkish empire—an event which he said was inevitable—should be no more. I cannot agree in opinion with the right hon. gentleman on that subject. I believe that there are elements when Turkey shall be more fairly treated—and never has any country been more unfairly treated than Turkey, especially within the last two years—for securing the independence of her empire, and (what to us is of vital interest) preventing Constantinople from becoming an appanage to any great military power. But if you carry on the war for that object—and that is our object—you must carry it on with more definite views and on a more natural system than you have given any evidence



of yet. We can only judge of your policy, we can only judge of your resources, we can only judge of your ability to deal with great difficulties from the records you have placed upon the table, and which give the history of the conduct of your government; and records more barren of information, more calculated to impress me with the melancholy conviction of the incompetency of our statesmen to deal with subjects of vital concernment to a great nation, never yet met my eye or engaged my attention. The noble lord (Lord Palmerston) may rest assured that it is not the language of party that I am now uttering. He is too able a man not to be convinced that the irresistible course of European events will baffle all mere party politicians, and that no party support can sustain a minister whose policy will not stand the test of time and the scrutiny of an impartial public, and prove to be a policy the result of study, meditation, and an anxious desire to attain the truth.

"The noble lord, though he may for a moment defy the words of those who sit opposite to him in this House, and though he may be sustained by a majority collected God knows how, and voting God knows why, may rest assured that if he and his colleagues are pursuing a course without sufficient knowledge, without sufficiently clear ideas, without a resolution sufficiently firm—that if there is any wavering in their councils, which is the natural consequence of an ignorance of the subject with which they have to deal—if there is any hesitation—if at this moment, when they are about to vote, they have not a definite idea of the object for which they are struggling, and of the means by which they are to accomplish the avowed purpose which we have agreed in this House is the object which we wish to achieve, namely, the preservation of Constantinople to the Ottoman Porte—then, I say, the noble lord may rest assured that the utmost confusion and consternation will fall upon the cabinet of which he is a member, and that no parliamentary power can sustain a ministry dealing with great

transactions to which they are not competent; and that if they are conducting our foreign affairs as they have hitherto conducted our home affairs—I speak now of preceding as well as present governments—living from hand to mouth, adopting merely the whim of the moment, not influenced by any principle founded on knowledge, and acting upon no natural system and for no determined purpose—then the noble lord may rest assured that his ministry must fall, or if it continue, the future of this country is a future of gloom too terrible for imagination to contemplate."

Lord Palmerston replied upon the whole debate. He appealed to the common patriotic feeling of the House in support of the crown and the government to carry through a struggle necessary for the interest and honour of the country. The "peace at any price" party were the only members who had introduced bitterness and passion into an important and gravely conducted debate. "With peace in their mouths," he sneered, "they have nevertheless had war in their hearts; and their speeches were full of passion, vituperation, and abuse, and delivered in a manner which showed that angry passions strove for mastery within them. I must say, judging from their speeches, their manner, and their language, that they would do much better for leaders of a party for war at all hazards, instead of a party for peace at any cost." Lord Palmerston then said, that as the amendment of Sir Francis Baring was almost exactly such a one as the government themselves would have proposed, he foresaw that a large majority would rally to vote for that amendment, and thus enable ministers to give effect to the wishes of parliament and the country in carrying out the object of the war. And what was that object? It was to prevent "the partition of Turkey" by a gigantic power which would stride like a Colossus from the Baltic to the Mediterranean; and in so doing, not only protect the Sultan, but that very trade of manufacturing

districts which Russia prohibited and Turkey enlarged. "I trust," said Lord Palmerston, in conclusion, "that party feeling will for one night be set aside; that, as it is no longer a conflict of party—the vote a fortnight ago having silenced that question—we shall, at least for one night and upon one occasion, be unanimous in our assurances to the crown that we are determined, as the true representatives of the people of this great country, to give to Her Majesty the best support we can in the prosecution of the war to the attainment of a safe and honourable peace."

Mr. Lowe's amendment was then put, and negatived without a division; after which the amendment of Sir Francis Baring was carried without further opposition.

Such was the end of this memorable debate. It plainly proved both the truth and the necessity of Mr. Disraeli's motion.

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Almost every speech that was delivered on the occasion went to show that the ministers were divided as to the objects of the war—were uncertain in their conduct, and ambiguous in their language. Though the motion was not adopted, it forced the hand of the government, and compelled the Palmerston cabinet to abandon their policy of blundering hesitation and dangerous confusion. It showed that the negotiations at the conference had been conducted on a false basis, that ministers had set no issue clearly before them, that they were divided in their councils, and blindly dependent upon the slippery councils of Austria. It also proved how soundly the man "who had not one drop of English blood in his veins" interpreted the wishes of the nation, how exacting, yet non-aggressive, was his patriotism, and how jealous he was of England's honour and reputation.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### "PEACE."

A FEW days after the vacillating cabinet had decided upon abandoning diplomacy for active hostilities, the hero of a hundred fights, to whom the fortunes of the British army were intrusted, passed to his rest. It was known, when Lord Raglan consented to accept the post of commander-in-chief of our forces in the East, that his health was indifferent; still it was hoped that the campaign would be a speedy one, and that the gallant officer would not seriously suffer at his time of life from being again sent upon active service. But the difficulties of his situation, the unnecessary privations his men had to undergo, and the unjust censures then freely passed upon his command, all tended to depress and enfeeble his proud and sensitive spirit, and thus prepare the way for the sickness that was to lay him low. Yet he died a soldier's death, fighting the cause of his country in a distant land; and his last moments were soothed by the thought that his long career might by those who loved him be looked back upon without shame or fear. His life had been one incessant period of civil and military activity. At an early age he had embraced the profession of arms. In 1807 he was selected by the Duke of Wellington to serve upon his staff on the occasion of the expedition to Copenhagen. So great were his talents, and cool his judgment, that the great duke held Lord Fitzroy Somerset, as he was then called, in such high estimation, that the two men were afterwards inseparable. There was no action in which the Duke of Wellington was engaged in the Peninsular war in which the future Lord Raglan did not take a conspicuous part. At the siege of Burgos he was among the foremost in the assault upon the

capture of that celebrated fortress, and it was to him that the governor of that town surrendered his sword. At Waterloo his gallantry won for him great distinction, and there he had the misfortune to be wounded, and sustained the loss of an arm. During the forty years' peace he worked assiduously at the Horse Guards, assisting successive commanders-in-chief with his able advice and co-operation, and being no less useful to his country than he had been eminent in time of war. So distinguished were his services, that he was honoured with a peerage. In spite of the obstacles against which he had to contend, his command of the army in the East, in all the operations in which it had been engaged, had been eminently successful. In his death England lamented the loss of a great soldier, a great general, and a great gentleman.

So distinguished a commander was not permitted to descend into the tomb without recognition. The following message was announced to parliament:—"Her Majesty, taking into consideration the great and brilliant services performed by the late Fitzroy James Henry, Lord Raglan, field-marshal in Her Majesty's army, and commander-in-chief of Her Majesty's forces at the seat of war in the East, in the course of the hostilities which have taken place in the Crimea; and being desirous, in recognition of these and his other distinguished merits, to confer some signal mark of her favour upon his widow, Emily Harriet Lady Raglan, upon his son and successor to the title, Richard Henry Lord Raglan, and the next surviving heir male of the body of the said Richard Henry Lord Raglan—recommends to her faithful Com-



mons the adoption of such measures as may be necessary for the accomplishment of that purpose."

In both Houses this message was considered, and gave rise to a complimentary debate, in which the merits and services of the deceased commander were feelingly and eloquently commented upon. Lord Palmerston proposed that the annual sum of £1000 should be settled upon Lady Raglan, the widow, and a further annual sum of £2000 settled upon Lord Raglan, the son, in tail male. Mr. Disraeli seconded the proposition (July 3, 1855), in one of his customary graceful funeral orations. "I rise, sir," he said, "to second the resolution of the noble lord, which I doubt not will meet with the unanimous acceptance and approbation of this House. After half a century of public service, all that which was noble and sometimes illustrious ought not to be permitted to pass away without the record and recognition of a nation's gratitude. The career of Lord Raglan was remarkable. Forty years ago he sealed with his blood the brilliant close of a great struggle against the danger of universal empire; and after that long interval he has given to his country his life, in order to guard it against the menaces of a new and overwhelming enemy. The qualities of Lord Raglan were remarkable, and it may be doubted whether they will be supplied by a successor, however able. That which, perhaps, most distinguished him was an elevation and serenity of mind that invested him, as it were, with a heroic and classical repose; that permitted him to bring to the management of men and the transaction of great affairs the magic influence of character; and that often in his case accomplished results otherwise produced by the inspiration of genius. Perhaps there is no instance on record in which valour of so high a character was so happily and so singularly allied to so disciplined a discretion. Never were courage and caution united in so great a degree of either quality. Sir, over the tomb of the great

departed, criticism must be silent; but even here it must be permitted to all of us to remember that the course of events has sanctioned the judgment of that commander with respect to those difficulties with which it was his hard fate to cope, but which, his country must recollect, he did not choose or create. May those who succeed him encounter a happier fortune; they will not meet a more glorious end; for there is nothing more admirable than self-sacrifice to public duty. That was the principle which regulated the life of Somerset; it was the principle which he carried with him to the grave. I feel great pride in seconding the resolution." The resolution was agreed to (it being in the days before Ireland had degraded herself by sending her present representatives), without a dissentient vote.

The popular chamber was, however, soon to ring with a debate of a very different character. We have heard how Lord John Russell, immediately after his return from Vienna, had expressed in no doubtful terms his views as to the renewal of hostilities with Russia. The Czar had refused to limit his naval power in the Black Sea; he should therefore be compelled, cried the envoy, to submit to the proposals of diplomacy by the force of arms. Hence the world believed that the negotiations at Vienna had been broken off with the approval of the English plenipotentiary. It now appeared that, in spite of this bellicose tone, Lord John Russell had approved of the terms of peace suggested by Austria; he had laid them before the Congress, and he had returned home with the object of supporting them in the cabinet. This double-dealing was made public, not through ministers, but through the publication of certain Austrian official documents in the continental newspapers. No sooner had the discovery become known, than a strong feeling of indignation was excited throughout the country against our late envoy. Why, it was angrily asked, had not Lord John been himself the first



to inform the House of Commons that the terms submitted by the Austrian government had met with his approval, and that he was still in favour of them? Why, with peace in his heart, did he consent to occupy a seat in a cabinet pledged to carry on war? Why did he not have the courage of his opinions and resign his post, as his French colleague, M. Drouyn de Lhuys, had resigned? What were the reasons he could assign for completely setting aside, upon coming home to England, his own convictions upon the most important question of modern times, and surrendering his judgment and abnegating his opinions to his colleagues in the cabinet? If such conduct were to be permitted to pass unquestioned, there was an end of all confidence in government and in the honour of public men.

Such jesuitical diplomacy was, however, not to pass unquestioned. The case came before parliament, and Mr. Milner Gibson requested Lord John to explain his conduct, and how it was, if the facts were as reported, his lordship, bound by his promise to Count Buol the Austrian minister, still retained his place in a cabinet pledged to cripple Russia now that the proposals of the Congress had been rejected? The answer of the late plenipotentiary was among the most singular that refutation has ever set forth. It was quite true, replied Lord John, that he had concurred in the Austrian propositions; he had thought they would give not a certainty, but a very fair prospect of the duration of peace, and they had met with his full approval. On quitting Vienna he informed Count Buol that the instructions he had received from London led him to suppose that the Austrian proposals would not be accepted; but that his own opinion was that they ought to be, and might be accepted. He, therefore, promised the Count that on his return to England he would do his best to place those propositions in such a light that the Austrian government might hope for their adoption. He had fulfilled his promise. The Austrian

suggestions had been deliberately considered by the cabinet; but the government had arrived at the conclusion that the peace proposed would not be a safe peace, and that they could not recommend its adoption. Why, then, asked Lord John, did he still continue a member of the government? He occupied a two-fold position. As a plenipotentiary it was for him to submit to the decision of the government; as a member of the cabinet it was his duty to consider the circumstances of the time. He had so lately abandoned his seat, there had been so many secessions from the cabinet, there had been so great a disposition on the part of the public to denounce all authority and to call in question the characters of all public men, that he did not think himself justified under the extraordinary circumstances in maintaining his own opinions upon this grave question, by surrendering his seat in the cabinet which had overruled his own convictions, at the risk of bringing about another change. Though out of office, he might have given every support to the government; he felt that his resignation would have increased the instability of the administration and would have been considered the precursor of other changes. Within the cabinet it was the duty of the minority to give way to the majority, if there was a majority and a minority; it was the duty of the individual to defer to the sentiments of the cabinet in general, and to leave it to the House of Commons to decide whether or not ministers were to be trusted with the control of public affairs.

This answer was rightly deemed most unsatisfactory, and keenly criticised by the House. It was said that if the example of Lord John Russell were to be considered as a precedent, it would strike at the very foundation of all confidence in public men, and render it impossible that the representative system could be carried on with success. The public had faith in public men because they believed that public men had certain opinions, were swayed by certain

principles, and might be relied upon to act according to their convictions. Lord John Russell had acted throughout this affair in a mean and underhand fashion. He had led the country to believe that he had returned from Vienna disgusted with the proposals for peace made in that city, and that he was therefore anxious to stimulate the passion of the country in order that the war might be carried on more vigorously. Yet all the time he was the advocate of the Austrian proposals of peace, and considered that such proposals offered "a guarantee for the security of Europe!" He was a peace minister in a war cabinet. Such double-dealing with the confidence of the country it would be hard to equal.

Mr. Disraeli did not permit the occasion to pass without addressing the House (July 6, 1855). "This evening," he said, "is memorable, and will long be memorable in the history of this country for the revelations and for the confessions on the part of a minister of state holding a very high and peculiar position—confessions and revelations which probably have not been before equalled in the memory of any man living. What have we heard to-night so unexpectedly, and which if I am not mistaken is destined to impress itself so seriously and painfully on the minds and opinions of this nation? We have had to-night an admission from the noble lord, the secretary of state for the colonies, who was recently employed by his sovereign in the high position of minister plenipotentiary to negotiate on a subject of no less moment than that of peace or war, that after having given, as he has admitted, great care and anxiety to the prosecution of his labours, he arrived at a favourable solution of the difficulties with which he had to contend, and had in his own mind accomplished measures which would have secured peace for this country, and that to recommend these measures to the government which employed him he returned to England. Strange to say, it seems the noble lord found no sympathy

on the part of his colleagues. They did not agree in the policy which he recommended. They decided upon a course totally adverse to that which he wished to sanction. They decided on a course no less decisive than the prosecution of that war which, in his opinion, ought to have terminated. The noble lord accedes to the suggestions of his colleagues. He remains in the cabinet of which he was a member during the negotiations; he remains in that cabinet—a minister of peace—and as a member of that cabinet he recommends the vigorous prosecution of that war in his place in this House.

"The reasons which the noble lord has given for this extraordinary course appear to me no less singular than his conduct. This is no slight question. The honourable and learned gentleman who has preceded me (Mr. Roebuck) in this debate has fairly said that it may be considered as the most important of all political questions. There is hardly a member of this House who would place any measure to regulate our internal condition, however high its aim, in the same category as a question whether peace should be accomplished or whether war should be prosecuted. The noble lord has told us to-night, notwithstanding it was his conviction that peace might be obtained and ought to be obtained, that he considered it his duty to support the policy of war, and which he has accordingly done, both as an eminent member of the cabinet and of this House. The noble lord has rested the vindication of his course on a principle which, according to his version, is calculated to raise his character as a public man, who by so acting has absolutely sacrificed his own feelings to his sense of public duty. I may differ from the view which the noble lord has taken on this subject; but I think that the question of peace or war, especially under the circumstances in which this country finds itself at present, is one that ought not to be an open question. Lax as have been the rules and regulations in recent cabinets with



regard to open questions, I certainly cannot conceal my surprise at learning to-night from high authority that peace and war are open questions in the existing administration. But what I want to ask, after these extraordinary revelations of the minister, is this—is this House for peace or for war? Because whatever may be the opinions of hon. gentlemen, whatever the opinions of those gentlemen who with great ability advocate their views in favour of peace, or those of gentlemen on this and on the other side of the House who think that the war should be prosecuted with vigour and energy, still I shall assume that we must all be of this mind, that there is very little chance of either obtaining a satisfactory peace or prosecuting a successful war, if in the very bosom of the cabinet such contrary sentiments prevail, and if the most eminent members in the councils of Her Majesty are influenced by ideas so conflicting on questions so vital. The question of peace or war must always in all countries, but especially in a free country, be a subject of controversy; but all parties, nevertheless, will agree in this, that whether we are to have peace or war Her Majesty's ministers ought at any rate to be unanimous on the point. I cannot, indeed, see any chance of efficient and vigorous action in either respect, or for either result, if the present state of affairs continues such as it has been described to us to-night with startling candour by the noble lord, the secretary of state, whose revelations will, I doubt not, long linger in the ears of the people of this country."

And now, asked Mr. Disraeli, was he wrong in having described such a state of affairs, except by such expressions as "ambiguous language and uncertain conduct?" Events had fully vindicated the course he had taken. After the speech of Lord John Russell, not a member of the House could not but feel that the country had suffered from that "ambiguous language and uncertain conduct." In position did the House of Commos

found now, at the end of the session, that it had lost every opportunity of vindicating the policy it ought to have pursued? "I wish to know," inquired Mr. Disraeli, "what is the position in which this country now finds itself with respect to the prosecution of this war, in consequence of the confession of the minister to-night? Two years ago, or less, when the whole country and the House were complaining of the great neglect displayed by the administration of this country in preparing for the war then impending, what was the excuse made for ten precious months which had been wasted? It was that we were preparing and securing those great alliances, without which there would be little prospect of the war being waged with success. Well, I want to know what probability there is of our obtaining the assistance of what were styled by a member of the then government the great German Powers, after the admission made to-night by a leading member of the government? How can we appeal again to Prussia, or ask any European power to assist us in this struggle, when we have acknowledged to Europe that just terms have been proposed by Austria on which peace might be obtained—when that has been acknowledged by our plenipotentiary extraordinary and one of our leading statesmen? Will not Austria, Prussia, or any other state, turn round and reply to the demands of our ministers, 'We do not at all agree with you in the necessity of making renewed efforts to curb the ambition of Russia; we think that the elements of a durable peace are in the power of able managers of circumstances, and our authority for so thinking is the distinguished statesman you sent to Vienna to represent your interests, and to advocate such a settlement of these disturbed relations as might appear most advantageous.' Well, then, I say that the effect of the debate to-night on our prospect of conducting this war with success is of very evil tendency. Nor is it merely on our alliances that the



admissions of the noble lord have injurious consequences. Whenever we enter into negotiations again with Russia there is upon record—placed there by the noble lord as a guide to Russia—a statement of what we consider our just demands might require. Whether, therefore, we look to our alliances, or contemplate negotiations with our enemy—whether we look to the influence of public opinion in this country, of those who advocate war, or who wish to accomplish peace—an equally injurious effect will be created by the extraordinary communications made to the House to-night by the secretary of state.”

He came then to the point, continued Mr. Disraeli, what was the object of the war? what were the ends which the government proposed to themselves? Unless ministers dealt frankly with the country it was totally impossible to carry on the war with the vigour necessary to success. What chance had the cabinet of creating or maintaining enthusiasm in the people if the suspicion got abroad, as it must do after the present debate, that ministers were making of the question of peace or war merely the means of maintaining themselves in office; that peace and war were convenient or inconvenient just as they might create or influence a majority? If such an idea ever became prevalent, he knew nothing which would more deaden the spirit of the country.

“And how are you,” concluded the leader of the Opposition, “to extricate yourselves from the peculiar difficulties in which you are now placed? How are you to remove all those disadvantages except by coming forward frankly and speaking to the House and to the country after this fashion:—‘Our eminent colleague exerted himself for a great object. We are of course, as all are, favourable to peace; but our colleague was too zealous for the good cause in which he embarked—he made admissions which we considered fatal to the interests of the country, and we could not support him in the course he took. We do not think that

he showed that prescience, that acquaintance with the subject, that statesmanlike sagacity that are necessary. It is painful for us to make these admissions; but we must do our duty to our country, and we tell you that the noble lord entered into arrangements which we entirely disapprove. Our policy is different. The policy which we intend to pursue is one of great vigour, which aims at great results, which will not be satisfied unless the power of Russia is materially reduced; and it is entirely opposed to the policy which the noble lord pursued.’ But then unfortunately, under such circumstances, the noble lord the secretary of state would probably find it necessary to quit the cabinet of which he is so important a member. Well, then, has it come to this? Is this to be the end of this important session?—the end of breaking up so many governments?—the end of our great efforts, our great disasters—of the struggle in which the nation has engaged? of that government at the head of which we were to have a minister of surpassing energy, and no doubt transcendent experience? Is this the end of the ministry which was to put the right men in the right places? Is this the end—that even peace and war have become mere party considerations, that the interests of the country are sacrificed to the menace of a majority, and that the turbulent assemblies of Downing Street are to baffle all the sagacity of all the conferences of Vienna?”

The course pursued by Lord John was not to be visited merely with comment and criticism, and then to be calmly forgotten. By all right thinking men the conduct of our envoy was considered to have been inconsistent with those principles of political honesty which ought to govern the consciences of all public individuals. Sir Bulwer Lytton gave expression to this almost general feeling. He proposed a vote of censure in the following terms:—“That the conduct of our minister in the recent negotiations at Vienna has, in the



opinion of this House, shaken the confidence of this country in those to whom its affairs are intrusted."

Had a debate taken place on this motion there can be little doubt that Lord John Russell would have been expelled from the cabinet by parliamentary censure. His recent conduct had been judged most harshly, since it seemed impossible even for his best friend to invent extenuating circumstances. He had returned to England with a project of pacification which he approved; he had laid that project before his colleagues, and it had been rejected; as an advocate of peace he still continued to belong to an administration pledged to carry on war; and in addition to these inconsistencies, he had delivered a speech in the House of Commons which conveyed to the country that he was an uncompromising advocate of war, that he had returned from Vienna with the conviction that an uncompromising prosecution of the war was absolutely necessary, and that from his experience in the conferences at the Congress it was impossible to enter upon an attempt at negotiation with any reasonable hopes of success. In other words, Lord John conveyed to parliament and the country an impression utterly inconsistent with the facts of the case. Conscious of the hostility he had excited against himself, and also of the punishment awaiting him, the late plenipotentiary resolved to solve the difficulty, and cease further to embarrass his colleagues, by tendering his resignation. Before a full and by no means sympathetic House his lordship explained the reasons which had led him to take this step. It had been stated, he said, that he had pledged himself to use his influence with the government to accept the Austrian proposals. That was not true; yet it was perfectly true that he had placed those proposals before the cabinet, and had used all argument to have them accepted. He believed that they would have achieved their purpose by combining all the possible means of

aggressions of Russia, and have placed Turkey in a position of security. It had been made a matter of reproach to him, that since his return from Vienna he had been in favour of a vigorous prosecution of the war. Yet, after the rejection of the Austrian propositions, what other course was open to him? It had been said that parliament had not been informed at the time of the fact of these proposals. With that he had nothing to do; it was the duty of the foreign secretary to make such communications; still he thought it was quite right on the part of the government to abstain from a premature communication, which would have been unjustifiable and a dereliction of duty on their part. The Opposition appeared to believe that there were but two abstract points to be considered—peace or war. The government had viewed the matter differently. They thought peace preferable to war, that satisfactory terms might be obtained, and that a limitation of the Russian fleet would furnish a security, though an imperfect one, such as would justify a termination of the war. When the Austrian suggestions, continued Lord John, were declined, he returned to his former opinion, and was in favour of a vigorous prosecution of the war. The impression, however, seemed to prevail that because he had taken a favourable view of the Austrian propositions he must be ever after incapable of serving Her Majesty during the war. He did not agree with that impression. Still, he plainly saw it existed; and considering that under the circumstances his presence in the cabinet would be disadvantageous, he had pressed his resignation, which had been accepted.

"Now, sir," he concluded, "let me say, that having taken that course, I do not feel that I am at all discontented with the position in which I stand. I see no reason to be so. In the first place, I have acted always for what I believe to be the benefit of the country. I have thought over these questions again and again with a view to



the public interest, and I have refrained from advising that which was disapproved, or rather, I should say, that which did not obtain the concurrence of those who generally held the same views as myself, and who were acting with me in the same administration. I have felt that, in the position which I have occupied at various times, I have found many true and attached friends, and I must say that, towards them, beginning with the members of the cabinet which I have left, I have every reason to thank those friends for their confidence and friendship. But, sir, others there certainly are of a different class :—

“ ‘Those you make friends  
And give your hearts to, when they once perceive  
The least rub in your fortunes, fall away  
Like water from ye, never found again  
But when they mean to sink ye.’ ”

Some there are of that class—I trust but few—with respect to whom I can only say, that I regard them with contempt. With regard to public affairs, it has been my fortune, far beyond my deserts, to carry on or assist in carrying measures which have promoted civil and religious liberty, which have tended to the promotion of the moral and religious welfare of this empire. I say, sir, that I have had that good fortune, far beyond my deserts, and that is a satisfaction of which I cannot be deprived. That in the course which I have pursued, and in the positions which I have at various times filled, I should have been slandered and calumniated, is a circumstance at which I ought to feel neither surprise nor dissatisfaction. There have been men whom I have known, and among them I cannot but recollect my dearly loved friend, the late Lord Althorp, whose only ambition it was to steer clear of office, and who, when he held the highest offices in the state—purely for the good of his country—only aspired to descend from them, and yet I have known him calumniated as seeking place. I have seen but lately a gallant and a skilful soldier calumniated—I mean the great and humane Lord Raglan, who was slandered

and persecuted even to the very verge of the grave. I say, therefore, that I can feel no dissatisfaction, and no surprise, at being myself thus calumniated; but if I had to balance my political account with my calumniators, I could say to them that I have been able to promote, by measures which I have seen adopted, the welfare and advantage, the liberty and prosperity, of my country; and in doing so, I have met with many warmly attached and excellent friends—men of a nature as noble as that of any men who have ever taken part in public life—and I have this satisfaction, that whatever errors I may have committed, whatever mistakes I may have made, I have always endeavoured to satisfy those friends and my own conscience, and therefore I have no reason to be dissatisfied with the result at which I have arrived, even if that result should be forever to exclude me from any voice in the management of public affairs. Whatever, therefore, may be the result of the motion of the hon. baronet opposite (Sir Bulwer Lytton), I have no desire that it should be postponed, and I am most willing that he should have the fullest opportunity of making any charge against me which he may think necessary in support of the views which he entertains. To these observations I can only add, that I am satisfied to abide by the decision of the House.”

This reply was precisely of that kind which never fails to irritate an Opposition. It was mean, it was shift, and it was wretchedly feeble. Lord John Russell implied that he had not so much retired from office owing to the hostile feeling of the country, as he had been deserted by certain of his own followers. His fortunes had wavered, and some of his friends had forsaken him. Yet this was far from being the true story. He had been deserted because he had been guilty of gross inconsistency and a culpable concealment of policy. So childish an evasion of the real charge did not blind the House, and a somewhat warm and personal debate ensued



—one of those debates which parliament loves, full of keen invective, acrid recriminations and accusations, as bitterly directed as they are venomously refuted. Sir Bulwer Lytton congratulated the country on the victory it had achieved; with much eloquence and pointed sarcasm he exposed the inconsistencies of the late minister's diplomatic and political efforts, "who lately suppressed his sentiments lest he should damage his government, while a few months ago he had overturned a government rather than suppress his sentiments." At last the nation had got rid of a statesman "in whom Russia sees an excuse, Austria a justification, France a dissentient from her policy, and England the condemnation of her war." Sir Bulwer then taunted the cabinet for being divided, and severely animadverted upon the conduct of the prime minister, who had accepted office with a distinct declaration of his intention to carry on the foreign policy of Lord Aberdeen, whilst he rejected proposals which that policy would certainly have accepted. Mr. Bouverie, the vice-president of the board of trade, then, amid shouts of laughter, spoke in the highest terms of "the integrity, the honour, and the sagacity" of Lord John Russell, though at the same time he felt bound to confess that he was disposed to question his lordship's judgment. Nor was the laughter checked when Mr. Bouverie proceeded to explain the circumstances under which, though most unwillingly, he had conveyed the information to Lord John of the impression felt by many of his colleagues that they would not oppose the motion of Sir Bulwer Lytton. Lord Palmerston, in a speech which exhibited more temper than was usually his custom, refuted all the accusations brought forward by Sir Bulwer, and boisterously denied that there was any division of opinion in the cabinet on the subject of the war.

Mr. Disraeli now rose (July 16, 1855). After a few remarks "common-place bluster" of Lord

"Let me remind the House of the gravity of the subject which is now under their consideration. Let me remind the House of the peculiar circumstances that have attended all the negotiations which have either preceded this war or have occurred in its progress. What happened at the beginning of the last session of parliament? When we were discussing in the House papers which were laid upon the table, who was it that expressed, on the part of the government, their determination to uphold the interests of this country and their want of confidence in the conduct of Russia? Is it not a fact that it was the noble lord, recently the secretary of state for the colonies, who rose in his place and, echoing the feelings of the House and the country, denounced the emperor and minister of Russia as men guilty of false and fraudulent conduct, amid the cheers of the House? And what occurred? Why, there came out an article in a foreign newspaper referring to transactions which had been concealed from this House; and in a few days the House was favoured with the most singular revelations which probably were ever made with regard to the diplomatic management of our affairs. What has happened this year? The same minister comes down to the table and makes a speech exciting the passions of the country, in order to carry on this war with effect. And what is the consequence? Again a foreign document appears, the circular of the Austrian minister, referring to circumstances which were again concealed from the House of Commons, and were most antagonistic to an effective prosecution of the war. Is not this a remarkable coincidence? Last year's speech of the noble lord brings out a secret and confidential correspondence which was carried on by many members of the present cabinet, and in which they addressed the Emperor of Russia in a tone very different from that which they used towards him in this House. This year's speech of the noble lord brings forward a circular of the Austrian minister, and we find that at

he said,



the very time the House was addressed by these ministers in a tone which would induce the belief they were ready to embark in an internecine struggle, these very ministers were in secret and confidential communication with Austria, in order to recommend and carry through parliament an arrangement totally opposed to the policy which in this House they recommended. Are not these grave circumstances? Is there not some lingering self-respect in the House of Commons which will not allow such circumstances to pass unnoticed, uncriticised, and unchallenged?"

He declined, continued the speaker, to make an attack upon an individual member of the government; for he held the whole cabinet responsible for the conduct of the late envoy. There was no member of the cabinet who was not identified with the policy of Lord John Russell. He believed, and he did not make the statement without due authority, that the views which that noble lord brought from Vienna were favourably received, not merely by a majority, but by the whole of the cabinet; and that nothing but circumstances which ministers did not anticipate, and difficulties which suddenly arose, prevented the plan of the late plenipotentiary being cordially and unanimously adopted. He had told the prime minister some weeks ago that they were only in the ante-chamber of discussion, and his lordship had then tried to stop the progress of discussion. What had since occurred? Every day and every hour had brought fresh information and fresh instances which required discussion; from that moment to the present they had been discussing those affairs, and should continue to discuss them as long as the conduct of the government was veiled in that thick cloud of ambiguity and doubt which now pervaded the political atmosphere.

"The House will therefore see," continued Mr. Disraeli, "that we have to consider a subject of vast importance. The sacrifice

has been great which has prevented our coming to a vote to-night to decide the fate of the cabinet. The noble lord (Palmerston) takes credit to himself, because when his noble friend offered his resignation and he accepted it, although he accepted it he told his noble friend he was ready to stand or fall by him.\* I admire friends and colleagues who are ready to stand or fall by one another; but then after such bold and unequivocal declarations of respect and affection, one might wish to see the act follow the word. But upon this occasion it does not seem that the noble lord either stood or fell by his friend. The noble lord is neither standing nor falling; but on the contrary, he has remained sitting on the Treasury bench. How is the knot to be unravelled? The noble viscount presses the hand of the noble lord; he vows eternal devotion to him; he says we are in the same boat—we shall share the same fate therefore; and in a spirit of political justice and generous partizanship, which would be admirable if it were sincere, says, 'One member of a firm cannot be bankrupt alone according to the laws either of England or of honour, and we stand or fall together.' But in the meantime there are means by which the first minister, who is excessively dexterous and adroit, can extricate himself from the difficult position in which he finds himself pledged to stand or fall with the noble lord, the member for the city of London. It requires the talent of a vice-president of the board of trade—a divinity in that form and inspired by that spirit—to disentangle a knot of such difficulty and delicacy as the one which the noble viscount has encountered. The pro-

\* "We did not sacrifice my noble friend. I did decline to receive his offer of resignation made upon the Monday; and even on the Thursday when he told me, 'I have made up my mind to resign my situation,' I replied that it was for him to judge—that the question had assumed a shape so peculiarly personal to himself that I could not pretend to give him my advice as to the course he should pursue: but this I said to him, that if upon reflection he thought it would be better for him to stay in, I should be prepared to face the motion of the hon. baronet opposite with the government as it then stood, and that I should stand up and vindicate the conduct that he was ready to adopt."—*House of Commons, Lord Palmerston, July 16, 1855.*



cess seems to have been successful. I listened to the vice-president of the board of trade with the feeling which became the occasion. I have not the honour of being a friend of the noble lord, the member for London; but I appreciate, I hope, his high qualities in common with the vice-president of the board of trade. I cannot, I confess, therefore fully comprehend the position of the vice-president of the board of trade in this case as not only the friend, but the devoted friend and political admirer of the noble lord. I can only very distantly approximate to the nature of his feelings; but I must frankly admit—and the House recognizes, I am sure—the agony and emotion which he must have undergone before he arrived at the result which he felt to be inevitable. There have been many instances of friends and friendships. Friendship is the gift of the gods, and the most precious boon to man. It has long occupied the thought and consideration of essayists and philosophers; there have been more analyses of the elements of the different degrees of friendship than of any other quality granted to sustain and solace humanity. There, for instance, is the devoted friend who stands or falls by one like the noble lord, the first lord of the Treasury. But there is also another kind of friend immortalized by an epithet which should not be mentioned to ‘ears polite.’ We all know that friend. It was, I believe, a brilliant ornament of this House who described that kind of friend; and I must say that, although as the devoted friend the prime minister must after to-night be allowed to take the highest position, still for a friend of the other description, a friend who is not a very bad-natured friend (the House will know exactly the friend I mean), I say commend me to the right hon. gentleman, the vice-president of the board of trade.”

Mr. Disraeli then commented severely upon the mysterious withdrawal of Lord John Russell from office so as to evade all public discussion upon his conduct,

and upon the tone of Lord Palmerston in replying to the strictures of the House.\* “For a person of this description,” cried Mr. Disraeli, referring to Lord John Russell, “with such accumulated responsibility, having his conduct challenged by the House—and the first minister of the crown, his colleague having pledged himself to a full discussion, and to stand or fall by the verdict of the House of Commons—for such a man to withdraw from the public service, evade all discussion, and then for the first minister to get up and jocosely tell us it is ‘much ado about nothing,’ is really more intolerable than trifling. It is not a manner in which questions of this kind should be met—it is not a tone which should be adopted—this patrician bullying of the Treasury bench. It may be assumed upon the discussion of a private bill, or on some petty struggle of party which may be a triumph to-night and be forgotten to-morrow; but when we are discussing a question involving the policy of one of the greatest nations of the world—the policy of peace or war, which brings under consideration the conduct of camps and conquerors—when we have before us the behaviour of a statesman whose mind and conduct have given colour and form to the political history of this country for a quarter of a century—it is not fitting that the noble lord, the first minister of the crown, should rise and attempt to stop discussion by language addressed to my hon. friend (Sir Bulwer Lytton), which I will not use an unparliamentary epithet to describe, but certainly not language which I expected from one who is not only the leader of the House of Commons, which is an accident of life, but is also a gentleman.”

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to assert, amid cries of denial from the Treasury bench, that had it not been for France refusing to entertain the proposals of Aus-

\* Lord Palmerston had said that the motion of Sir Bulwer Lytton was “Much ado about Nothing;” Sir Bulwer wittily retorted, that he believed “Much ado about Nothing” came after the “Comedy of Errors.”



tria, the cabinet would have accepted the terms brought from Vienna. It was all very well, he sneered, to cry No, no! but would any minister rise and speak upon the subject and refute his facts? No, no! would not do. He again asserted, that if it had not been for the refusal of the Emperor of the French to accept the course suggested by Austria, the proposals brought back from Vienna would have been entertained, and would, if possible, have been carried through parliament.

"Admitting, then," he continued, "the inference to be a just one, what are we to think of this triumphant war minister—this minister who is only made a minister because he can carry on the war with great skill—what can we think of his conduct to his late colleague, the right hon. baronet the member for Carlisle (Sir James Graham) and his friends? Did you, or did you not, approve of the project which the noble lord the member for the city of London brought over? And this is a subject on which we ought not to be content with any superficial reply. It is not enough for a minister to get up and say, 'We did not approve that project, though there might be some points upon which we agreed.' Is it, or is it not the fact, that the noble lord the member for the city of London had communicated with his colleagues—other colleagues than those whose names appear in the papers before the House? Did he not communicate the outline and spirit of the policy which was developing under his auspices at Vienna, and did he, I ask, receive any discouraging reply? Is there not, on the contrary, reason to believe that he did communicate it, and did not receive any discouragement. Did the noble lord the member for the city of London, when he arrived in England, expect, and had he reason to expect, that there was a fair chance of those propositions being acceded to and carried into effect? I beg the attention of the House to this. Is it a fact, or is it not a fact, that the French minister communicated with the

authorities at Paris while he was at Vienna; that he received a reply which was favourable to those propositions; that that reply was communicated to the noble lord, the member for the city of London; that the noble lord in consequence communicated with his colleagues; and that, in fact, there was—not a compact or a convention, but a general understanding for a brief space, even between both governments, that those terms would have been accepted? Is it, or is it not a fact, that there was at last a day—I believe a much longer period—when those terms were cordially accepted by the government in London, and when the noble lord accepted them? [To this Lord Palmerston replied, "No!"]

"Very well," continued Mr. Disraeli, "I remember six weeks ago making a speech about ambiguous language and uncertain conduct, and I then had the same 'No!' from that same bench. I do not know whether the present session of parliament will last six weeks longer; but if it do, I believe that I shall find that the remarks which I am now making, and which are received so sceptically from a quarter—although a limited quarter—in this House, will be acknowledged by the great majority of this House to be authentic truth. All I can say is, that I make the statement upon information which I believe to be of the highest authenticity. I do not want it to be more esteemed than any information which I give upon my own personal authority, but I express my profound conviction of its truth. And now we are told that this is 'much ado about nothing!' Two years ago you were involved in diplomatic negotiations upon a most important subject. If any member of this House at that time asked a question, he was told, 'Do not press it, you will embarrass our diplomacy.' Honourable gentlemen yielded, and what did that abstinence on the part of the House of Commons end in? In the greatest diplomatic defeat on record. Another year came,



and you were involved, not in diplomacy, but in war. If a gentleman rose then in the House to ask a question, he was told, 'Silence! say not a word; the enemy will know our plans; you are placing obstacles in the way of our vigorous prosecution of the war.' And what did that end in? In the most disastrous war ever conducted! Now a third year has come, and the third session is about to expire. Nearly at its termination, when all are silent, including those who think there is no greater object in life than parliamentary success, and that a strong government is the government which can command a parliamentary majority—a foreign document appears; the mind of the country is agitated at a few expressions in that foreign document, and a question is asked in the House of Commons. Doubt and distress pervade the land, and a belief exists that there is guilt in the management of our affairs; for I call it guilt—I call it guilt to come down to this place as a minister, to a free House of Commons, and to give reasons for your policy which are totally at variance with your secret instructions to your minister abroad. That single foreign document appears; the people are agitated; they think; they talk; their representatives in this House ask questions. What happens? The foremost of your statesmen dare not meet the controversy which such questions provoke. He mysteriously disappears. With the reputation of a quarter of a century, a man who has reformed parliament, who, as he has told us to-night, and often before, is the successful champion of civil and religious liberty, in the cause and name of which he has accomplished great triumphs—he who has met the giants of debate; he who has crossed his rapier with Canning, and even for a term shared the great respect and reputation which this country accords to its foremost men with no less a person than Sir Robert Peel—he dare not meet the debate. But who dares meet it? The first minister of the crown, who has address

to-night in accents and in language utterly unworthy of his position, and utterly unworthy of the occasion, and who has shown to me to-night, by his language and by the tone of his mind, that if the honour and interests of the country be any longer intrusted to his care, the first will be degraded, and the last, I believe, will be betrayed."

The government, as the leader of the Opposition had asserted, "dared not meet the debate;" and after lame apologies from Sir George Grey and Mr. Gladstone, the motion of Sir Bulwer Lytton was withdrawn.

The House, however, had not heard the last of ministerial mismanagement during the Crimean war. The Sebastopol committee had concluded its labours; and in another portion of this work we have alluded to the censure passed upon the Aberdeen government, which fittingly ended the report. On the Blue Book coming into the hands of members, Mr. Roebuck moved the following resolution:—"That this House, deeply lamenting the sufferings of our army during the winter campaign in the Crimea, and coinciding with the resolution of their committee that the conduct of the administration was the first and chief cause of the calamities which befell that army, do hereby visit with severe reprehension every member of that cabinet whose counsels led to such disastrous results." The disclosures attendant upon this inquiry of civil incapacity and military fortitude led to a debate which lasted two nights. In vain refutation and palliation endeavoured to meet the charges and parry the attacks of the Opposition; the case against the late cabinet was so strong as practically to be unanswerable. "It is now manifest," concluded Mr. Roebuck, after recapitulating all the facts with which we are familiar as to the courage and endurance of the soldiery, and the inertness and incompetence of Lord Aberdeen and his colleagues—"It is now manifest that the administration which I wish to censure have been guilty of wrong; and whether



the result of carrying my resolution be to transfer power from one to the other side of the House, is to me a matter of total indifference. All that I wish for is justice; all that I desire is to see that we shall never again be in the position of calling on a body of our brave fellow-countrymen, and at the same time sit here night after night faced by a body of men by whose supineness and errors they are being consigned to an untimely grave. In this spirit I have moved the resolution which I now, sir, place in your hands. I am aware that I have inadequately performed the duty which I have undertaken; but I have done so to the best of my ability, and I now leave the question to the decision of the House."

By certain members the motion of Mr. Roebuck was considered to wear an aspect of vindictive personality; and the previous question\* was moved by General Peel, and seconded by Lord Robert Cecil. On the second night of the debate Mr. Disraeli addressed the House (July 19, 1855). He could not, he began, agree to give a vote upon a question which presented itself in so ambiguous and unsatisfactory a state as the present, without attempting to explain the motives which induced him to take the course which he felt it his duty to adopt. They had heard much in the course of the discussion of party motions, party feelings, and party objects; but if he were to choose a motion which would be convenient to party objects and

\* The "previous question," as it is called, is an ingenious method of avoiding a vote upon any question that has been proposed. At the close of a debate, or when there is no debate, the Speaker "puts the question," without any direction from the House; but by a motion for the previous question this act of the Speaker may be intercepted. The words of this motion are, "that that question"—i.e., the proposed question—"be *now* put." If the previous question be negatived, the House thereby decides that the principal question to which it relates shall not be put from the chair at that time. If, however, it be carried, the principal question is accordingly put from the chair without further debate. Sir Harry Vane is said to be the first contriver of the previous question; hence a member in the reign of Charles the Second said in debate, "This previous question is like the image of the inventor—a perpetual disturbance." In a Committee of the House there can be no previous question; but if it be wished to avoid the question, it is usual to move that "the Chairman do leave the chair."

which would strengthen the Opposition, it would be the course about to be adopted that night by the government, and it would be the motion ministers were about to support. A vote of censure upon the government had been moved, and how had it been met? "It is met," answered Mr. Disraeli, "by the government by a form of the House, which practically and literally means that the House declines to express either confidence or want of confidence in the government. When a motion of a want of confidence or of censure is brought forward against the government, their defence is simply to ask the House only to decide not to proceed with the controversy. Now, I think the Opposition might fairly be satisfied with such a result; and when taunted with party objects and party motives, it appears to me if we had only party objects in view we need not have prolonged this debate, but might have joined with the noble lord at the head of the government in supporting the hon. and gallant member for Huntingdon (General Peel) who moves the 'previous question,' and have been satisfied, in the present temper of the country upon this question, that when a vote of want of confidence or of censure (adopting the description of the noble lord) is brought forward he, confident in himself and his powers, should deem he is doing everything necessary to vindicate his policy when he entreats the House of Commons to express no opinion at all upon it. But it appears to me that we have something to consider beyond the convenience of a ministry or of an opposition. . . . Let us remember what has been the cause of this motion. A few months ago a committee was appointed, by an immense majority of this House, to inquire into the condition of our army before Sebastopol. What was the cause of the appointment of that committee? Was it the feeling of this House? No! It was the feeling of the country. We know that the battle of Inkerman has been termed the soldiers' battle; the



Sebastopol committee was the people's committee. After a protracted investigation, conducted by some of the most distinguished men in this House, a report has been presented, and a resolution is now proposed by the chairman of that committee, asking the House to coincide with the opinion of the committee in its chief finding. I do not now want to argue that the chief finding is just or unjust, politic or impolitic; but I think the country has a right to call upon this House to express an opinion one way or the other upon that issue. The tone which the noble lord at the head of the government has adopted is most singular, most remarkable, and in my opinion most unauthorized by what has occurred. The noble lord has taken the course of decrying the committee, of denying the value of its researches and the truth of its conclusions. . . . If the noble lord says these statements are not true, I ask, ought he to take refuge in the 'previous question?' Ought not the noble lord for the sake of his own honour, as an act of duty towards this House and the country, to come forward and say, 'The labours of your famous Sebastopol committee are superficial; the committee have conducted their investigations in a spirit not worthy of the occasion; they have misled and they are misleading the people. But I will not submit to have the authority of the government injured by their unfounded report; I will vindicate my policy and the character of public men; I will prove in the face of this House that their assertions are without foundation, that their recommendations have no authority; and at this moment when the country is engaged in a great struggle—when, therefore, confidence in the government is an inestimable treasure, and you ought not, without overwhelming evidence, to have recourse to a vote of censure—I call upon you to declare that this committee on the state of the army before Sebastopol has not done its duty, but has performed it in a crude and fraudulent spirit; it has misled

the country and poisoned the public mind; and I call upon you to come forward and support the authority of the queen's government.' The whole course of the noble lord's observations renders it his duty to take such a proceeding. He says that this is a party motion—a party motion brought forward by whom? by a gentleman who, when I six weeks ago brought forward a motion which the noble lord said struck at the existence of his government, voted in favour of the noble lord! . . . If I wished only for a party success, I should be content that the House should vote for the 'previous question,' and I should say, 'Here is a government against whom a vote of censure is moved, glad to shield themselves under a formal motion in order to evade the opinion of the House.' As a mere partizan that would be a sufficient triumph. But I did not, sir, even suppose that the motion of the hon. and gallant member for Huntingdon would ever seriously have to be put from the chair. I have frequently, on several great questions, found the 'previous question' launched, but have seldom seen it arrive at the port to which it was directed; and I thought that the gravity and reality of the issue in the present case rendered it impossible that any one would seek shelter under such a formal motion, but that all, whatever their convictions might be as to the real question, would desire that the opinion of the House should be taken on the real question. I thought that the noble lord would be among the first to come forward and request the hon. and gallant general not to embarrass the House, or to place any obstacle in the way of an expression of its opinion, by moving the 'previous question,' which after two nights' debate would but leave the matter where it was before, and would not strengthen the government even in the opinion of their most sanguine supporters, but would disappoint the country and waste the time of the House."

Mr. Disraeli, after commenting upon the insufficient preparations being made for



carrying on the war, alluded to the statement brought forward by ministers, that these discussions would have an ill effect upon France. He thus concluded:—

“Frequent allusions have been made to the influence which anything that passes in this House may have upon our relations with France. Now, if every time that the people of this country complain of the mismanagement of their affairs—if upon every occasion when they appeal to their representatives for redress on account of that mismanagement—a minister is to rise and tell them that they can have no redress, and that they must not even speak upon the subject, because it may involve us in our relations with our allies, rest assured that any minister or any public man who pursues that course is doing more to endanger the alliance between England and France than by any free criticism which may be expressed in this House, which, if true, will in the long run be listened to with respect, and which, if not founded on truth, will easily be confuted. Let the suspicion once be prevalent that the grievances of the people as to the administration of their affairs in regard to this war are never in their own House to be mentioned on account of the alleged fear of endangering our alliance, and you are shaking that alliance to its centre, and changing the cordial and sympathetic sentiments which now prevail between the two countries into feelings of distrust, of jealousy, and suspicion. Sir, the division is now about to be called, and I blush to recollect the issue which is at stake. After two nights’ discussion in this House, after the laborious efforts for months of the committee upon a most important subject, with some of our most eminent statesmen appealing to the House for justice and frankness in our conduct, and with the whole country looking with interest to our decision to-night, we are coming to a vote which can confer honour and credit upon no body of men, and no individual member of this assembly.” After a short reply from Mr. Roebuck, the House divided upon the

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previous question—Ayes, 182; Noes, 289; majority 107.

Parliament was prorogued by commission August 14, 1855, and a session which had chiefly been spent by the Opposition in exposing the blunders of the government, and by ministers in endeavouring to refute their attacks, came to an end.

Meanwhile—thanks to the ardour of our troops—the war had been pushed vigorously on. In the royal speech proroguing parliament the commissioners said, “Her Majesty has commanded us to say that she has seen with sincere regret that the endeavours which, in conjunction with her ally the Emperor of the French, she made at the recent conferences at Vienna to bring the war to a conclusion on conditions consistent with the honour of the allies and the future security of Europe have proved ineffectual; but those endeavours having failed, no other course is left to Her Majesty but to prosecute the war with all possible vigour. Her Majesty relying upon the support of parliament, upon the manly spirit and patriotism of her people, upon the never-failing courage of her army and navy, whose patience under suffering and whose endurance Her Majesty has witnessed with admiration, upon the steadfast fidelity of her allies, and, above all, upon the justice of her cause, humbly puts her trust in the Almighty Disposer of events for such an issue of the great contest in which she is engaged as may secure to Europe the blessings of a firm and lasting peace.”

For this issue the country had to wait some months. Into the details of the campaign that followed upon the breaking off of the negotiations at Vienna, it is beyond our province to enter. We shall but touch upon them, so as to elucidate the comments subsequently made by the subject of this political biography. Lord Raglan had been succeeded as commander-in-chief by General Simpson, and the appointment only tended to display how infinitely superior in military discipline and foresight had been



the general's predecessor. Early in August the Russians made a desperate attempt to raise the siege of Sebastopol, but, thanks chiefly to the valour of the Sardinian contingent, the besieged were repulsed with grave loss. The allies had drawn their lines nearer and nearer to the doomed city, and it soon became certain that the fate of Sebastopol was only a question of days. The capture of the Malakoff by the French, and the storming of the Redan by the English, though the battery was shortly afterwards retaken by the Russians, decided Prince Gortschakoff to abandon the city. Under cover of the darkness of the night the prince withdrew his troops, and then fired the town which had so long resisted the efforts of the allies. "It is not Sebastopol," wrote the Russian commander, "which we have left to them, but the burning ruins of the town which we ourselves set fire to; having maintained the honour of the defence in such a manner that our great grandchildren may recall with pride the remembrance of it, and send it on to all posterity." As a set-off to this victory, Kars, which had been brilliantly defended against tremendous odds by Colonel Fenwick Williams, was forced by famine at last to surrender. The gallant colonel had to contend against two enemies; he had to contend against the Russians, and at the same time against official jealousies and the want of energy and foresight of the government. Hopes of peace were now entertained, which happily were soon realized. Austria again stepped in to use her good offices, and they were eagerly listened to. Russia was anxious to obtain peace, provided her national honour did not suffer. France had had enough of war, and was desirous of developing the domestic reforms she had instituted. England was alone both willing and prepared to fight to the bitter end, if necessary; though she would not be vindictive if satisfactory terms were laid before her. The Congress of Paris began its labours late in February, and on March 30, 1856, the treaty of Paris

was signed by the plenipotentiaries of the great powers. The chief articles of the treaty were as follows:—

Russia engaged to restore the town and citadel of Kars to the Sultan, as well as the other parts of the Ottoman territory of which the Russian troops were in possession. Sebastopol and all other places captured by the allies were, in like turn, to be handed over to Russia. The Porte was to participate in the advantages of the public law and system of Europe. The independence and territorial integrity of the Ottoman empire were to be respected by the powers: any violation of such independence was to be looked upon by them as a question of general interest. The condition of the Christian population of the Ottoman empire was to be ameliorated. The Black Sea was neutralized; the Sultan and the Czar engaging to maintain no military-maritime arsenals in its waters. The navigation of the Danube was thrown open. The frontier of Bessarabia was to be rectified, and the territory ceded by Russia to be annexed to Moldavia under the suzerainty of the Porte. Moldavia and Wallachia were to continue under the suzerainty of the Porte, and to enjoy all their past privileges and immunities. The Sultan had power to prevent ships of war of foreign powers from entering the Straits of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus, so long as he was at peace. These were the chief clauses in the treaty of Paris. By a subsequent tripartite treaty (April 15, 1856) between England, France, and Austria, the independence and integrity of the Ottoman empire were specially guaranteed.

These conditions naturally came under the notice of parliament. The Houses assembled January 31, 1856, and the royal speech was at once subjected to the customary criticism. Her Majesty had said, "Since the close of the last session of parliament the arms of the allies have achieved a signal and important success. Sebastopol, the great stronghold of Russia in the Black Sea, has yielded to the per-



severing constancy and to the daring bravery of the allied forces. The naval and military preparations for the ensuing year have necessarily occupied my serious attention; but while determined to omit no effort which could give vigour to the operations of the war, I have deemed it my duty not to decline any overtures which might reasonably afford a prospect of a safe and honourable peace. Accordingly, when the Emperor of Austria lately offered to myself and to my august ally, the Emperor of the French, to employ his good offices with the Emperor of Russia, with a view to endeavour to bring about an amicable adjustment of the matters at issue between the contending powers, I consented, in concert with my allies, to accept the offer thus made, and I have the satisfaction to inform you that certain conditions have been agreed upon, which I hope may prove the foundation of a general treaty of peace. Negotiations for such a treaty will shortly be opened at Paris. In conducting those negotiations I shall be careful not to lose sight of the objects for which the war was undertaken; and I shall deem it right in no degree to relax my naval and military preparations until a satisfactory treaty of peace shall be concluded."

After the mover and seconder of the address had indulged in the platitudes and prize-essay reflections usually attendant upon these parliamentary efforts, Mr. Disraeli rose up. He expressed his satisfaction that Her Majesty should have acceded to conditions which might prove "the foundation of a safe and honourable peace," and that in spite of these prospects, the objects of the war would not be lost sight of. He was unable to criticise the terms of peace, for no authentic information on the subject was before him; but he hoped that, under these circumstances, the House would exercise "that prudent but high-spirited reserve which, while it shrinks from embarrassing a minister on whom is about to devolve the fulfilment of so difficult a duty, will at the same time watch with the utmost vigilance

—I will not say suspicion—the course of all his proceedings." Then the speaker alluded to a feeling which was somewhat prevalent. To a certain section in the country the hope of peace was not welcome. England was now perfectly prepared to sustain a long war; she was anxious to atone for many of the blunders of the past, and she was burning to re-assert her military supremacy in the eyes of Europe. War in order to obtain definite political results and war simply to pander to the conceit of national vanity were two very different objects, and Mr. Disraeli—whom his enemies have decried as the apostle of "Jingoism"—very properly rebuked this empty and culpable pride. Besides, he failed to see that the lustre of the British arms had been dimmed. "We are told," he said, "that although we may have attained the objects for which we embarked in war, still it is expedient that the war should be continued, in order to sustain or to increase the lustre of the arms of England; or rather, perhaps, because in the struggle that may, and which, I trust, will soon cease, we have not achieved exploits so striking as those which illustrate some portions of our history. Now, sir, the abstract principle that we ought to continue a war, after having attained its objects, merely to gratify the vanity or to support the reputation of a community is, in my opinion, one of a very questionable character; but I deny that in our present circumstances any application of that principle is possible. I, for one, will never admit that the lustre of our arms has been tarnished. It is not easy to find words to express the admiration which all must feel for the great qualities which have been exhibited by our troops throughout this struggle. It is not easy to describe the vast resources which we have at our disposal, and the energy which we have already displayed. I lay down as a principle, that the leading powers of Europe should never engage in a war unless they are certain and predetermined to achieve victories which may figure among what are



called the decisive battles of the world, is really one of the most monstrous propositions that was ever addressed to the intelligence of a nation. To suppose, for example, that France or England is never to go to war unless she can be certain of achieving victories like Rocroi or Blenheim, Austerlitz or Waterloo, is totally to misunderstand the object for which great states go to war. Instead of their being the vindicators of public law and the conservators of public order, you degrade them into the gladiators of history, and their brilliant achievements would only be crimes which might accomplish the ruin of this country. Therefore, I cannot at all admit that the principle that we ought to continue this war, in order to obtain extraordinary results, is one which we ought at all to sanction; and I am afraid that those in this country who fall into this fallacy are too much induced to do so by the taunts of foreign critics. But the very persons who indulge in those taunts are themselves the persons most persuaded of the substantial increase of the power of England. If you look to the authors of those statements respecting the decline of the prestige of England—I will not inquire who or where they may be, whether they are journalists who have become statesmen, or statesmen who have become journalists—you will generally find that they are the persons who are most competent to estimate the importance of England, and who are really the least inclined to undervalue it. They play upon the too easily excited susceptibility of the people of this country; and I will say of them, as was said of a great sceptic, that when they attempt to depreciate our achievements and our resources, they really ‘tremble while they sneer.’” Mr. Disraeli concluded by pronouncing a brief but high eulogy upon the defenders of Kars, and regretted that no mention of their gallant conduct had been inserted in the speech from the throne.

The question of the decline and fall of Kars soon became a matter for parlia-

mentary inquiry. It was impossible that a frontier town like Kars, the very key of the Bosphorus on the Asiatic side, should have been allowed to fall into the hands of the enemy, owing to the neglect of the government, without the circumstance leading to a debate in the House of Commons. It was said that had Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, our ambassador at Constantinople, paid proper attention to the despatches of Colonel Williams, had troops been marched to the assistance of the besieged, had money been sent to furnish the town with provisions, had, in fact, ministers acted with vigour and prudence, Kars would not have fallen a prey to the Russian arms. These reflections were embodied in the following resolution moved by Mr. Whiteside (April 28, 1856)—“That while this House feels it to be its duty to express its admiration of the gallantry of the Turkish soldiery, and of the devotion of the British officers at the siege of Kars, it feels it to be equally a duty to express its conviction that the capitulation of that fortress, and the surrender of the army which defended it, thereby endangering the safety of the Asiatic provinces of Turkey, were in a great measure owing to the want of foresight and energy on the part of Her Majesty’s administration.” A three nights’ debate showed the interest taken by the House in the question. The Opposition abused Lord Stratford for not having supported Colonel Williams, abused Lord Panmure for his direction of the war department, and abused Lord Clarendon for his management of foreign affairs. The root of Russian power, as opposed to England’s Indian empire and to Asiatic Turkey, lay in Georgia; and it was therefore the duty of a British minister, when war broke out between Russia and Turkey, to assist the latter at the right time and with the right means. Why had not ministers asked for the money—for the £50,000 or £100,000—that would have saved Kars? Why had those unnecessary delays been created, which had prevented Omar Pasha from



entering upon the expedition which would have resulted in the relief of Kars? On the other hand, the government declared that to have withdrawn the troops from before Sebastopol to secure a merely secondary object—the safety of Kars—would have been highly impolitic in a strategical point of view; whilst, as to the political point of view, the fate of Kars had been utterly without influence on the treaty of peace. The object of the war was not to defend India against a Russian attack, but for European interests alone, totally unconnected with those of our colonies. It was a matter for regret that Lord Stratford, through pressure of business, should have omitted to answer Colonel Williams' despatches; but the ambassador had done all that it was possible for him to perform. Kars fell from famine; but if the pasha of Erzeroum had done his duty, the town would have been well supplied with provisions. There was no occasion for such a vote as that proposed by Mr. Whiteside.

Mr. Disraeli, on the third night (May 1, 1856), addressed the House. He vindicated those who supported the resolution from the charge of being animated by factious opposition. A great war had just been terminated, and an important peace had just been concluded. During that space of time an event had occurred which had exerted a powerful influence on public affairs, and which, even if it had not exerted that influence, had been attended with circumstances which enlisted the deepest sympathy of the people of the country. There had been a heroic exhibition of all those virtues and qualities which Englishmen appreciated and honoured; there was a prevalent belief that men distinguished by all those qualities and virtues had been deserted by the government; and now, after a wise forbearance, due to the state of the country and to the embarrassing duties of the administration, a forbearance which reflected credit on the House, the time had arrived to discuss the question which for so long a period had touched

the hearts and occupied the hearths of the whole country. There was nothing factious, or sordid, or selfish in such discussion. Whatever might be the decision at which the House arrived, was there a man in the country who did not feel that the siege and fall of Kars ought to be the subject of parliamentary discussion?

"I think," continued Mr. Disraeli, proceeding to lay down the rules which guided him and his followers in their antagonism to ministers—"I think it becomes the House of Commons to have some more clear idea of the position of an Opposition in this country, and of the duties it has to fulfil, than appears to be prevalent among some hon. gentlemen, and even right hon. gentlemen on the ministerial bench. It appears to me that the first duty of an Opposition is to vindicate their principles whenever they deem it necessary and convenient, and to assert them without the slightest reference to what may be the consequences of a division. I think, in the second place, that it is the paramount and peremptory duty of an Opposition to offer its criticisms on public affairs when they think the conduct of the ministry demands observation, without the slightest reference to the consequences of a division. If the duty of an Opposition is only to be tested by the success which upsets a ministry, it is very easy to see that the sphere of opposition must become very limited; and no doubt that is a theory very agreeable to a ministry, from whatever party selected. To say that opposition is only to be justified by a division sufficiently successful to upset a ministry,\* is to lower political conduct to a selfish and sordid standard. It is telling the people of this country that their parliament is not to be an assembly where the relative merits of different principles of government are to be discussed and debated, where the pulse of the nation is to be felt, and where even the passions of the people are to be represented; but that it is to be

\* The motion of Mr. Whiteside had been described as "simply an attempt to upset the ministry."



a clever, well-organized, mechanical assembly, where nothing is to be considered but selfish consequences and the mere personal ambition of the individuals who are fortunate enough to obtain a seat in it, and where the possession of power and the disposition of patronage are to be, in fact, the sole objects held in view. It is not so that I have understood the character of parliament; it is not so that I have conceived the duties of opposition. There is a ready answer for a minister to a captious and factious opposition. He will appeal, and generally speaking, not without success, to the independent feeling of this House; and if he is not supported here, he will appeal without fear to the country. But so long as we represent—whether our opinions be erroneous or not—a great force of public opinion on any question which may be brought forward, it is our duty to express it, and to invite discussion upon it; so long as we vindicate, though we be a minority—and it is the necessary consequence of our parliamentary system that an Opposition should be a minority—the principles of government and the policy which we think right, we are fulfilling our duty; and not all the swagger of a minister, not all the flippant taunts of his followers, will deter us from taking that course, which we believe to be founded on right and justice. Nor will any majority, however accidentally gained, deprive discussion of its consequences, nor prevent the force of truth—if truth be on the side of our opinions—ultimately prevailing.”

Mr. Disraeli then discussed the conduct of the ambassador at Constantinople, and dealt with his negligence more mercifully than had other members in the course of debate. He did not consider that the conduct of Lord Stratford was a principal element in the subject. When the fall of Kars was first known in the country there was, he said, undoubtedly an instantaneous feeling of sorrow and indignation in the public mind. He hardly ever remembered an occasion when their troops had not been

engaged, and when their own immediate interests were not affected, on which the feeling excited was so deep, so prompt, and so instantaneous. What happened? Mysterious whispers were heard from those who knew it was impossible to deny the nature and consequences of the catastrophe, and who, feeling how disgraceful and injurious the event must be to the government, were anxious to palliate it as much as possible. It was darkly said, that if the truth were only known, the government would be found perfectly blameless, and that there was another influence at work which had produced all the mischief. In a considerable time, in a most powerful and consistent manner, by the most able machinery, the public mind was kept quiet by the intimation that there would at last be a revelation as to the criminal influences which had caused the sad disaster; but that the country must wait for a time before the scapegoat could be indicated. At last the fact was published. Then every means which power, ingenuity, and some feeling of despair could command, was set to work to prove that it was the ambassador at Constantinople who was the real cause of the disaster. Numerous despatches addressed to the ambassador by Colonel Williams had remained unanswered, and the people of England were asked whether an ambassador who left numerous despatches unanswered on so important a subject had not betrayed his country? In that way public indignation had been excited against Lord Stratford, and there was one of those strong but premature verdicts pronounced against the ambassador, which are often as unjust as they are precipitate. He had not risen, continued Mr. Disraeli, to defend the conduct of Lord Stratford, because Mr. Whiteside had not brought the case of the ambassador before the House. The conduct of Lord Stratford, as shown by the documents placed by the government on the table, was indefensible. With that, however, he had nothing to do. If the ambassador had sinned so grievously



and had not been recalled, the government were alone responsible for his conduct. "Why, sir," cried Mr. Disraeli, laying down one of those constitutional maxims upon which he always acted—"why, sir, if there are any principles which ought to regulate us in our observations on public men, they are the two principles, never to permit an attack to be made upon a particular minister, when we believe that the whole cabinet is responsible for his conduct—a species of attack which I have ever resisted, and which, I hope, I shall never sanction; and never to allow that any person employed in the service of Her Majesty abroad, however outrageous, however iniquitous, however ruinous in our opinion his conduct may be—whether he be governor, ambassador, or general—is guilty, so long as he is not recalled by Her Majesty's government."

It was not a question of ambassadors, but of ministers. Lord Aberdeen fell because he neglected the war in Asia. A new government was started "under a happy, though most fortuitous combination of circumstances—we had a prime minister, a modern Chatham—determined to carry on with vigour the war in Asia." Yet, what did it do? What did it do for Colonel Williams? Did it assist him with men? The gallant colonel asked for 20,000 men to come to the relief of the beleaguered garrison in Armenia; yet he pleaded in vain, because it was said we could not spare the troops he demanded. "We have been assured," said Mr. Disraeli, and in his words we see the vigour and high courage of the man who afterwards gave England a foreign policy of her own instead of an obedience to the foreign policy of others, "we have been assured that we were so engaged in the Crimea, that all the energies of the nation were so concentrated on Sebastopol, and that the stake was so great, the conflict so arduous, that we could not venture on undertaking any other enterprise. That the stake was great I freely confess; that the energies exerted were no

greater than the occasion demanded, events have testified; that mighty efforts were required to be made, even by the leading nations who were embarked in the struggle is beyond all controversy; but what armies were assembled on that remote peninsula? France was there, imperial France; England was there, free and patriotic England; you had by your side the Turkish army, a gallant band whose valour had been proved on many a well-contested field; you had brought from the north of Italy a body of men, dauntless and intrepid, for whom I trust that the glorious destiny is yet reserved of exercising a high and salutary influence on the fortunes of their country; and not content with these assembled hosts, you had entered into conventions, enabling Austria to call to the banks of the Danube all the chivalry of Hungary and of Bohemia to protect your interests in Wallachia and Moldavia. You were five nations allied in a common cause—England, France, Turkey, Sardinia, Austria. That you were playing a high game, and that a great stake was at hazard before Sebastopol, I do not for one moment dispute. But was there not another power who had also a great stake in that mighty fortress? Had not Russia everything at stake in Sebastopol? And did she not prove how deeply and how tenaciously she felt its importance and value? Now that peace has been concluded, we can afford to speak of Russia with the respect and admiration due to the prowess, the valour, and the foresight of which she gave such abundant evidence throughout the recent contest. Russia, I repeat, had everything at stake at Sebastopol. Her pledge was as grave, her interest in the fate of the struggle as momentous, as it is possible for language to describe. Yet Russia could at the same moment defend Sebastopol and invade Asia Minor. And now we are to be told that the combination of two such enterprises exceeded our powers! What a tribute to our country! What a compliment to our great and faithful ally! What an en-



couragement for those rising Sardinians! What an animating reflection for Turkey in her future conflicts with the Czar, to tell her that the banded nations of Europe made common cause against Sebastopol, and that Russia unaided and alone, not only baffled them for a year, but sent an army of division to Kars, while you could not afford 900 men to Colonel Williams! I will not believe that we are so fallen, that the House of Commons will tolerate such a defence. I tell you that you ought to have sent forces to Asia Minor—however great the stake for which you were contending, however arduous the difficulties that encompassed you. Yes; even though you had not had these true and gallant allies by your side—even though you had stood against Russia single-handed and alone at Sebastopol, it still would have been your duty to have sent assistance to Colonel Williams in Asia Minor. What did Colonel Williams ask? We have upon the table of this House a despatch from that heroic officer, written about the time when the ministry of the modern Chatham was formed on the principle of carrying on with vigour the war in Asia Minor. I believe I am correct in stating that that despatch bears the date of the very day on which the noble lord took his seat as first minister of the crown. In that most interesting document Colonel Williams gave you an estimate of the forces necessary, not only to secure his communication with Erzeroum and the coast, but also to destroy the Russian army in those regions. It was no such extravagant calculation—he asked for 20,000 men. Yet this assistance could not be granted. While you were besieging Sebastopol with the aid of half the nations of Europe, we are to be told that with all the resources of England as completely at his command as if he had been an autocrat, with an enthusiastic nation ready to pour their treasure into his exchequer, the noble lord at the head of the government could not afford to send 20,000 men to the relief of the beleaguered garrison in Armenia!

It exceeds belief. Say, if you choose that as a matter of high policy you did not think it necessary to interfere; say, as the chancellor of the exchequer said last night, who with all the force of a most logical reasoner laid it down that the fall of Kars was not an event of any military or political importance\*—say that, or anything like it, and however the facts of the case may be, you will at least have a plausible case for argument; but in the name of common sense, and if you would not insult the intellect of the House, do not ask us to believe that you were prevented from vindicating a great principle of policy in Asia Minor, because forsooth your energies were concentrated on Sebastopol!" Whatever humiliating conditions might be imposed upon Russia, exclaimed Mr. Disraeli, she would be entirely compensated for all her losses by the avowal of an English minister in the presence of an English parliament, that united Europe when pitted against her was not so strong as to be able to offer resistance to Muscovite arms simultaneously in any two regions.

Mr. Disraeli then put this very pertinent question to the government—If they did not send men for the relief of Kars, why did they not send money? Was the money required at Sebastopol, as well as the soldiers of five nations? They had raised a Turkish Loan Bill, yet not a piastre had been sent to the relief of Kars. Colonel Williams had not been greedy in his pecuniary requests. A small sum would have been sufficient to have saved Kars. "We all know," said Mr. Disraeli, "the amount necessary to have done that. A sum such as you raise as a testimonial to a successful railway speculator, the sum that every hour of our lives we are called upon to contribute for some meritorious but obscure instance of excellent conduct, would have saved

\* "Whether we look, therefore, at the probable or the actual result of the fall of Kars, it must be admitted that in a strategical point of view it was not of first-rate importance. It was clearly secondary to the capture of Sebastopol."—*House of Commons, Chancellor of the Exchequer, April 29, 1856.*



Kars. Why, the cabinet might of themselves have subscribed the money!"\* The present administration had pledged themselves to conduct the war with vigour; and he had no hesitation in accusing them of want of energy and want of foresight. Colonel Williams had given ministers full and timely notice of the force necessary to secure, not only his safety, but his triumph. The gallant officer's demands were tossed about from one public office to the other, from one individual to another, and nothing was done. Was that energy? When the attention of ministers had been directed to the state of affairs in Asia, parliament had been assured that in the opinion of the cabinet the power of the Porte was sufficient to maintain its authority and dominion in Asia. Was that foresight? "We have," sneered Mr. Disraeli, "prescience and vigour united, and the fall of Kars is the result."

The House, however, refused, in spite of the lucid and cogent arguments of the leader of the Opposition, to support Mr. Whiteside's motion. On a division it was lost by a large majority—Ayes, 176; Noes, 303; majority, 127.

In compensation for all past neglect Colonel, now General Williams, was lauded to the skies, and became the recipient of substantial benefits. He was created a baronet, and a pension of £1000 per annum conferred upon him. In both Houses of Parliament his gallantry became the subject of special comment.

When the treaty of Paris came before parliament, Mr. Disraeli did not take any part in the debate which followed upon the announcement of Lord Palmerston that the war was at an end. The leader of the Conservatives had said that, considering the blunders of the last two cabinets, he would support any peace that was not positively disgraceful. The treaty of Paris, though it did not fulfil all the conditions required by a large body of the English

people, was certainly not disgraceful.† We had obtained, by a war which should never have taken place, the terms which diplomacy under a firm and vigorous government could have commanded. The mighty fortress of Sebastopol and the powerful Russian fleet in the Euxine, which had so long been a standing menace to Turkey, were now no more. The Black Sea had been neutralized. Turkey had been received under the common law of Europe, and her independence guaranteed by the great powers. The frontier between Turkey and Russia had been rectified; and the Sultan, by a special firman, had put an end to all degrading restrictions among his subjects, and had raised the Christians to that just position which they ought to occupy. Still, there were several points and omissions in the treaty to which the Conservatives objected. They complained that the rectification of the territory of Bessarabia, as arranged at Vienna, had not been carried out owing to the fall of Kars; that though the Black Sea was neutralized, there was nothing to prevent Russia building vessels of war at her great maritime arsenal, Nicholaieff, and floating them when required into the Euxine; that there had been no clauses inserted in the treaty demanding the independence of the Circassian tribes; and that the position of affairs in the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, was far from satisfactory. "Although the nation," said Lord Derby, "assents to peace, and gladly reposes from war, this is a peace which they do not hail with enthusiasm, but which they accept with reluctance, and which in the opinion of the country and in mine reflects no honour upon the ministers by whom it was negotiated."

Hostilities terminated, due recognition was made of the gallantry of the troops

\* "I have now ascertained that the sum of £27,000 would have saved Kars."—*House of Commons, Mr. Whiteside, May 1, 1856.*

† "Sir, on the treaty of peace which the right hon. baronet (Sir James Graham) thinks so satisfactory, I shall express no opinion, except to say in general terms that peace is a great blessing where war has been carried on so inefficiently; and that for my part, after all I have seen, I should be disposed to welcome any peace which is not disgraceful."—*Speech of Mr. Disraeli on the Fall of Kars, May 1, 1856.*



engaged in the campaign. In both Houses the following vote of thanks was unanimously passed:—

“That the thanks of this House be given to the officers of the navy, army, and royal marines, who have taken part in the operations of the late war, for the meritorious and eminent services which they have rendered to the queen and the country during the course of the war.

“That this House doth highly approve and acknowledge the services of the petty and non-commissioned officers and men of the navy, army, and royal marines, who have taken part in the operations of the late war, and that the same be communicated to them by the commanders of the several ships and corps, who are respectively desired to thank those under their command for their exemplary and gallant behaviour.

“That the thanks of this House be given to the officers of the several corps of militia which have been embodied in Great Britain and Ireland during the course of the war, for the zealous and meritorious services which, at home and abroad, they have rendered to their queen and country.

“That this House doth highly approve and acknowledge the services of the non-commissioned officers and men of the several corps of militia, who have been embodied in Great Britain or Ireland during the course of the war, and that the same may be communicated to them by the commanding officers of the several corps, who are desired to thank them for their patriotic conduct.”

In the House of Lords the vote was moved by Lord Panmure, and seconded by the Earl of Derby. In the House of Commons it was moved by Lord Palmerston, and seconded by Mr. Disraeli (May 8, 1856).

“I have, sir,” said the leader of the Opposition, “the high honour to second the motion of the noble lord. Although the struggle which has just terminated has, as the noble lord justly observes, not been of very long duration, yet such is the improvement which has taken place in the means of communication among the nations, and so complete in consequence has been the information which has reached us from the scene of warfare, that periods of hostility much more prolonged, and wars which some may think even more important in their object than the present, have not furnished the

chronicler of history with a greater variety of incidents and characters than the struggle which has just so happily terminated. So great has been the variety of deeds, so numerous have been the developments of character, which have already become household words in England, that one may say that every village has its hero and every fireside its thrilling tale. The object of the war, sir, was from the beginning understood by the people of this country, and they approved it, and the contest has been sustained by them with that firmness which can only be derived from conviction. The noble lord dwelt, with a detail into which it would be impertinent in me to enter, upon the peculiar circumstances of the various arms to which we are now ready to express our gratitude. Although these campaigns have not been of such duration as some which have taken place under great captains—those, for instance, of our own Wellington—still I believe there is hardly any variety of warfare which has not been proved during the course of the contest. We have had the pitched battle, and we have had the protracted siege; we have had heights triumphantly gained; we have had heights defended with success. Throughout these campaigns so numerous were the traits of individual bravery and heroism, such were the effects produced by the determination of our soldiers, that I do not know whether, were we to search the most glorious annals of past wars, we should be able to find deeds superior to the achievements of our contemporaries. The noble lord has also reminded us that the navy has in these transactions scarcely had the opportunity of distinguishing itself which it deserved, and of which it was fully prepared to avail itself. It is no doubt true that the sailors of England have never had the opportunity of meeting in pitched fight the naval armaments of the enemy; but we must remember that, by their enterprise, the flag of England has waved triumphantly upon waters where it had never before pene-



trated. The noble lord has likewise asked us to express our thanks to a third arm of the service—the marines—equal in every quality to the other two, whose daring deeds will, I am sure, always receive, as they have deserved, the admiration of this House. That is an arm which on various occasions in the wars of this country has rendered great services, for which it deserves the utmost praise which this House can bestow. I was very glad, also, that the noble lord dwelt with so much feeling, and so much justice, upon the services of the embodied militia. The manner in which the people of this country, when the militia was embodied, rallied round their national leaders is one of the most significant and gratifying proofs that the heart of England is true. The noble lord has stated that ten regiments of militia have served in our foreign garrisons during the late war; but the House should always recollect that it is not merely those ten distinguished regiments that have defended our Mediterranean garrisons who have been employed in active service during the war, but that those thirty-seven regiments, who in a manner so much to their credit offered their services to the sovereign, may be said, in a certain sense, to have partaken in the battles that have been fought.\* From their ranks those 30,000 good and well-tried soldiers were collected—from their ranks many of the youth of England entered into the service of the queen; and we may recollect with pride, common I am sure to both sides of the

House, that the gentlemen of England have during the war garrisoned our arsenals in this country, and defended our strong places abroad; and that many of those gentlemen are members of the House. The noble lord has treated with justice the subject of our cordial relations with our allies throughout the struggle. Admirable as was the fortune of Marlborough and Eugène, I think if we look back to the co-operation which took place between England and her allies, that we shall see that it has not been inferior in concord, sympathy, and generosity, to that which prevailed in that illustrious age. But while I would join with the noble lord in the fullest expression of thanks, even to our allies—if formally we might offer them—let us remember that there are some who were not our allies, who were not the soldiers of our sovereign, to whom it would be not only generous but wise to do justice. The father of poetry it is, I think, who tells us that the strength of a conqueror cannot be more surely estimated than by the character of him whom he has conquered. Sir, the men whom the forces of the queen and her allies had to meet in the great struggle which is now concluded, were no common men. The legions that triumphed under Suwarroff, and fought at the Borodino, although defeated at Sebastopol, have proved themselves foemen worthy of the united chivalry of England and of France. In doing this justice to our late opponents, we are, in fact, only placing the achievements of our fellow-countrymen and our allies in their true aspect and proper position. I have great pleasure in seconding the motion of the noble lord; and if it were not presumption I would express my opinion, that when the verdict—I will not say of posterity—but that when the calm and unimpassioned verdict of the time in which we live is given upon these events, it will be acknowledged that in the late struggle our country has shown all those qualities which maintain a nation's greatness, and which prevent the decline and fall of empires."

\* "When parliament gave the government the power of accepting the offers of these regiments to go on foreign service, besides the militia regiments which went to the Mediterranean, thirty-seven other regiments offered their services, which the government had not at the time any occasion to accept. But there were several regiments that did go abroad. They garrisoned Gibraltar, Malta, and the Ionian Islands. At Gibraltar there were the 3rd Lancashire, the Northampton, and the 2nd West York; at Malta the East Kent; in the Ionian Islands the Berkshire, the 1st Lancashire, the 3rd Middlesex, the Oxfordshire, the 1st Staffordshire, and the Wiltshire regiments. There were ten militia regiments that went, and thirty-seven that offered their services, and were ready to go; and I must do them the justice to say that those regiments who went have been reckoned as models of military efficiency."—*House of Commons, Lord Palmerston, May 8, 1856.*



## CHAPTER XV.

### "WARS AND RUMOURS OF WARS."

SHORTLY after the conclusion of the Paris conference the state of Italy became a subject of some discussion in the diplomatic and political world. One of the chief reasons why Count Cavour had been desirous of supporting the allies during the Crimean war, by despatching a Sardinian contingent against Russia, had been that it would offer to Piedmont an opportunity of setting forth her grievances against the power of Austria. The iron hand with which Austria ruled her Italian provinces had only intensified the hate with which the northern population of the peninsula regarded the German invader. That Italy should no longer be a geographical expression, but a kingdom under one head—free, united, and independent of all control of the foreigner—was the aim of her politicians and the cry of her agitators. The brutal arrogance of the Austrians, and the conduct of the Neapolitan government towards their political prisoners, had caused a strong feeling of sympathy in England with this movement, especially when it was remembered how splendidly the Sardinians had behaved themselves in that terrible hour when their courage was put to the test on the heights before Sebastopol. It was said that, at whatever risk, we were bound to support Sardinia and do all in our power to advocate her efforts in favour of Italian independence. The government were urged to make a positive declaration that the Italian States should not be occupied by foreign troops beyond a certain date. It was known that the prime minister was no friend to Austrian rule in the Italian peninsula; and without committing the cabinet to any decided course, Lord Palmerston did not look coldly upon the prayers of the Piedmont patriots. He played the

difficult game of trying to please both parties: he was the friend of Austria, and at the same time the supporter of Italian independence.

With this double-minded policy Mr. Disraeli had little sympathy, and he candidly expressed his views when the Sardinian loan came up for discussion on the occasion of the introduction of the budget (May 19, 1856). He wished to know, he said, now that the House was asked to advance a considerable sum of money to Piedmont, what were the relations which subsisted between England and Sardinia? Studying the protocols of the conferences at Paris, he found expressions of sympathy with suffering Italy which greatly exceeded the usual caution of diplomatic language. He found that the sovereign of Sardinia was encouraged in every way to persist in his efforts for the liberation of Italy. He gave no opinion of his own upon the subject; but in those papers he read that the rule of Austria in Italy was insufferable, that the occupation of the Italian provinces by Austria was the principal source of the degradation and misery of Italy, that it was the mission and the policy of Sardinia to terminate those evils, and that she looked for the co-operation and support of England in her efforts to that end. How did these hopes agree with the tripartite treaty recently entered into between England, France, and Austria? How could the government at the same time be the friend of Austria and yet encourage Sardinia to expel Austria from the Italian peninsula? Had English ministers not profited by their bitter experience in 1848, when by words they encouraged Italy to resist, yet failed to support such advice by actions—a deser-



tion still remembered on the continent with anguish and indignation? "If," he cried, "for the sake of exciting the unreflecting applause of a mob, and in order to obtain for the existing government the reputation of being devoted to those vague entities called 'Liberal opinions,' we are again to be in the position of stimulating Italian liberalism, while at the same time we rivet the fetters of Austrian despotism, I foresee for this nation consequences most fatal to her just and legitimate influence, and to that high character which, notwithstanding the mistakes we sometimes commit, and despite our party conflicts, it is our happiness to think that our country has hitherto maintained." He hoped the House would refuse to be made the cat's-paw of any government for the sanctioning of pseudo-liberalism. Such a policy simply tended the more to crush the oppressed and aggravate the weight of the despotic power. To uphold Austrian authority and Italian regeneration at one and the same time was a feat which only brought diplomacy into contempt, stimulated dangerous yet futile revolutionary efforts, and gave an impetus to the teaching of those secret societies which had for their object the overthrow of every constitution in Europe. "I feel," concluded Mr. Disraeli, "a deep interest in the future of Italy, and sure I am that there is no honest man in this empire who does not look forward with delight to the day when that immortal land, to which we all owe so much, shall take her proper place among the nations, and be again one of the leading communities of the world. But I for one base my hope of that consummation on my faith in the genius of the people and the resources of the country. Time, the great reformer, will save Italy; but if there can be anything that will throw her back in her career—anything that will baffle her advancing destinies—it will be the intrigues of politicians who are not Italians, and who, for the sake of getting a support which otherwise they might not command, trifle with the fate of a great

people, pander to the lusts of secret societies, pretend to sympathy they do not feel, and, for the love of popular applause and a momentary success, compromise the destiny of a gifted nation."

In the dangerous power exercised by the "secret societies," Mr. Disraeli was even then a firm believer. At the present day, with sovereigns assassinated, public buildings blown up, agrarian outrages and revolt against authority systematically conducted, no politician can afford to ignore the concealed machinery by which fenians, socialists, nihilists, and land leaguers work their infamous plots. But thirty years ago these secret associations inspired more contempt than fear in the public mind, and little attention was paid to their movements by practical statesmen. It was the province of the police to imprison such fanatics and crush their revolutionary attempts, but it was beneath the notice of ministers and cabinets to spy upon their actions. Mr. Disraeli thought differently, and he fully recognized how mischievous an element these associations might become in a state. On the occasion of Lord John Russell (July 14, 1856) bringing the question of Italian regeneration before the House, and advocating the establishment of constitutional government in the peninsula, Mr. Disraeli, in opposing any interference in the affairs of Italy, unless it was to develop into a real and practical interference, thus alludes to these traitorous organizations:—"The noble lord who introduced this question seems to think that the revolutionary spirit in Italy is obsolete and worn out; that there is no contest going on in Italy but between worn-out dynasties and some intelligent and well-educated persons of the superior classes, who desire his great specific for all evils—constitutional government. I do not think that is a true judgment of the Italian people or of Italy. There is in Italy a power which we seldom mention in this House, but without considering and understanding which we shall never rightly comprehend



the position of Italy—I mean the secret societies. The secret societies do not care for constitutional government. They do not want existing society ameliorated, they want it changed; and they seek objects from such changes such as can never be obtained or secured by those enlightened institutions to which the noble lord refers. We know something more of these societies than we did. Since the outbreak of 1848 we have had means—not sufficient, but still we have had means of obtaining a knowledge of their numbers, organization, principles, and objects; and without some consideration of these it would be absolutely impossible for us to form a conception of what would be the consequence of our interference in the affairs of Italy. It is useless to deny, because it is impossible to conceal, that a great part of Europe—the whole of Italy and France and a great portion of Germany, to say nothing of other countries—are covered with a network of these secret societies, just as the superficies of the earth is now being covered with railroads. And what are their objects? They do not attempt to conceal them. They do not want constitutional government; they do not want ameliorated institutions; they do not want provincial councils nor the recording of votes; they want to change the tenure of land, to drive out the present owners of the soil, and to put an end to ecclesiastical establishments.” In conclusion Mr. Disraeli advised the government to adopt a plain, straightforward policy. If they were resolved to advocate Italian regeneration, they must go to war with Austria and obtain the sanction of parliament for the course they proposed to follow. He did not believe the country would support such interference. Still, the nation would at least know what ministers intended, and to what England had pledged herself. But diplomatic communications without a declaration of hostilities would only set a great portion of Italy in flames, and result in consequences which all would deplore.

The subject then dropped, and it was left, as we all know, to other influences than those of English interference to regenerate Italy, and place her in the family of European nations.

The cabinet had ushered in the session of 1856 with the most tempting promises. In spite of the war and its consequent diplomatic negotiations then on his hands, Lord Palmerston had introduced to the notice of parliament measures of great importance—in fact, a greater number of measures of importance than had ever before been submitted to the House of Commons by any minister. The list was indeed imposing. A court of appeal—the highest court of appeal in the last resort—was to be created; a new law of partnership, founded upon principles which would facilitate the application of capital to commerce, was to be written in the statute-book; the law of divorce and important changes in the law of marriage were to be fully considered and dealt with; the discipline of the Church was to be amended; the question of national education was to be placed upon a satisfactory basis; the most important produce of the empire was to be ascertained by a system of agricultural statistics. Then in addition to these measures, the House was to take into its consideration matters touching the testamentary jurisdiction of the country, the condition of the police, the superannuation of the civil service, municipal reform, the criminal appropriation of trust property, and the retirement of bishops from their sees. These were schemes which, if carried out, would satisfy the most gluttonous of legislative reformers. As a matter of fact, however, the session was drawing rapidly to its close, and yet of all these tempting promises held out to the country, scarcely one had been fulfilled. They were either abandoned shortly after having been introduced, or else completely ignored.

Mr. Disraeli resolved to repeat his experiment of 1848, and pass in full and



critical review the labours of the session. Accordingly (July 25, 1856), he moved for a return of "the number of public bills and their titles, the orders for which in any of their stages have been discharged during the present session, and the date of the discharge of each of such orders." The speech which he delivered in support of this motion was of great length, and is not only important as a complete history of the session, but as a constitutional essay on the power of party, and the nature of true Conservatism. He began by stating that he called attention to the course of public business, not for the purpose of preferring an indictment against ministers, but because he hoped that, during the recess, some remedy might be devised for the grievances he should bring under the notice of the House. He then enumerated the list of measures proposed by the government, and caustically commented upon the fashion it had been carried out. The bill to improve the law of partnership had been introduced in February only to be abandoned in March. A second bill on the same subject was introduced in April, and in July met the same fate as its predecessor. Bills for the reform of the poor law, and for the regulation of lunatic asylums in Ireland, had been ushered in by ministers in April and deserted in May. A bill for the relief of the mercantile marine had been announced early in February, and had been shelved at the end of the month. The bill to found an appellate jurisdiction had been brought down from the Lords in June and abandoned in July. The same fate had attended the bill relating to the amendment of the law of divorce. The Church Discipline Bill, it was true, had not been abandoned, but on being sent up to the Lords it had been rejected on a division. The bills relating to Irish legislation had been introduced, and all had been abandoned. The Civil Service Superannuation Bill had met with the same fate; and then, said Mr. Disraeli, who was always

a staunch supporter of this public service, "were terminated all the hopes of that most meritorious and ill-used body of Her Majesty's servants." The bill for the reform of the corporation of the city of London had been introduced in February, and had been abandoned in June. Not, however, to weary the House, continued the critic, the same fate had attended upon the bills brought forward by the president of the board of works and by the president of the board of health. Two Irish bills had, it was true, become law, but they had been based on the measures of a Conservative member of the House, which had accounted for their favourable reception. The County Police Bill had passed; also the bill respecting the retirement of bishops, but "that was a measure which did not deal with the question, and which, therefore, has settled nothing."

Was this, asked Mr. Disraeli, a satisfactory state of things? Was the House aware of the extent and the importance of the legislative failures of the session? Could ministers be surprised at the prevailing discontent? They had held out to the country great expectations, and therefore they could not be astonished at the country feeling greatly disappointed. But to what had this unfortunate state of things been due? It was not occasioned by the forms of the House, for since 1848 such forms had been considerably curtailed; and, indeed, members rather imagined that there had been of late years too great a diminution of the checks which those forms afforded against precipitate legislation, than believed that the conduct of public business could be facilitated by any further reduction in the forms of the House. Nor was it occasioned by long speeches or protracted debates, for the session had been singularly exempt from eloquence and prolonged discussion. "To what cause," asked Mr. Disraeli, "is it then to be ascribed? I will state what I believe to have been the cause of it, and I beg the noble lord



and his colleagues not to suppose that in stating it I mean anything in any way personal to themselves. Quite the reverse. I believe the cause of this failure in legislation is mainly, if not entirely, to be attributed to the fact that the noble lord and the hon. gentlemen who now form the ministry cannot command a parliamentary majority. In the general conduct of affairs the greatest respect is paid to gentlemen who occupy their position—a position which they obtained, in my opinion, with all honour, and in a manner which, as far as the noble lord is concerned, does I think the utmost credit to his spirit and promptitude. I say that the greatest respect is paid to gentlemen who occupy that position; and I believe there is great willingness on the part of the House to fulfil its functions as to supply. All the money which is required for the public service is cheerfully granted to the noble lord when we are at war. If troops are wanted they are at once given to him; and when he is engaged in negotiations and requires forbearance, that forbearance is yielded with equal readiness. Whether he prosecutes a war or makes a treaty, he can count on the support of the House. But when Her Majesty's ministers, turning to the functions of a minister in a legislative assembly, submit measures to the consideration of parliament they do not meet with that confiding support which can only exist in this House when it is founded on traditionary connection or identity of principle. The noble lord and his colleagues are therefore never sure that their measures will succeed; and there are two consequences that result from this circumstance, of the most injurious character. The first is—and it is a great evil—that the queen's ministers should deem legislation necessary on subjects of paramount importance, and yet should not be able to succeed in legislating thereon. But there is another evil inevitably consequent upon this, and to which I attribute a considerable share of the present disaster. The moment a government is habituated to defeat, the

moment they find the chances are that the measures which they propose will not succeed, those measures cease to be prepared with that scrupulous exactitude, that fineness, that finish, and that completeness of detail which characterize the measures of a government that feel, on introducing a bill to parliament, all the responsibility of successful legislation; and thus it happens that a ministry is tempted to obtain popularity for a moment, and to make for themselves some transient reputation—if you can call it reputation—by dealing with a variety of subjects so that the country may say, 'Here is a government of men of business; these are the men we want. They are going to construct a high court of appeal; questions that have remained unsolved for 300 years are now about to receive a solution from these practical men; the law of divorce is to be reformed; the law of matrimony is to be improved; the law of partnership is to be adapted to the requirements of an enlightened age and a commercial country; and other great subjects, on which the thought of the nation has long been collected, are at last to be settled by men who, regardless of party considerations, are determined to show what can be done by people who are animated only by a desire to pass wise and useful measures.' When parliament met it was announced, on high although anonymous authority, that a new era had arrived in the history of the English parliament; that the mere struggle for power and place was to cease, and that instead of it we were to have a body of ministers who were essentially practical men of business—who were to deal with all the difficult questions that had baffled all the preceding governments. We were told that the maxim, 'measures not men,' was for the future to form the principle of our political life. Yet, after six months of idle phantoms and of empty noise, it is no longer 'measures not men,' but it is men without measures."

They had then, continued Mr. Disraeli, a government unable to command a parlia-



mentary majority. Two causes had been alleged for that weakness. The first cause attributed it to the consequences of the Reform Bill. Yet that bill had been in operation twenty-four years; and for a period of at least fourteen years out of the twenty-four, the affairs of the country had been conducted by cabinets of almost every shade of opinion, which had commanded large and compact majorities. Lord Grey, Lord Melbourne, and Sir Robert Peel had carried on the government with sufficient majorities. Therefore it did not appear that there could be any truth in the popular statement that the Reform Bill was at the root of that evil. Then there was the second cause. It had been said that party no longer existed, that parties were broken up, and that public men no longer held distinctive principles. Upon that point Mr. Disraeli spoke at some length, proving that, though the Liberals were disorganized, the Conservative party in all its unity still existed, that it professed a distinct creed, and that its opponents had availed themselves of much of its teaching to carry out the programme of their policy. Those who sneeringly ask, what is Conservatism? had better study the following remarks of the late leader of the party:—

"It is said," observed Mr. Disraeli, "that this state of things may be attributed to the fact that parties are broken up. It is a favourite topic to talk of the 'dislocation' of parties. Party they say no longer exists because there are no longer distinctive principles among public men. That, I believe, is also a very current opinion. But is it true? It would be well for us to consider, for the interest of the country and for our own honour, whether the fact is so. I will not venture to make any observations upon honourable gentlemen who are members of this House. It is my happiness to think that I have personal friends on both sides of it; and indeed, in my opinion, the question is one too great to depend upon the opinions of individual members either on one side or the

other. If I look to the country—if I look to society in its real sense, I mean to the society of all classes in this country—I do not find that parties are extinct—I do not find, when I listen to men of influence and mark among those classes of the community that take an active part in public affairs, that distinctive principles have ceased. I find that there exists two great classes of opinion which are fairly represented—not that I think the epithets originally were either very happy or very precise, but which have passed into universal and popular acceptance—by the terms Conservative and Liberal. I hold that those are two classes of opinions which are perfectly distinct, and in most instances are entirely opposed the one to the other. I will, with the permission of the House, proceed briefly, by way of illustrating my meaning, to advert to some points in which I think that distinction is particularly manifest. I wish to speak of both these classes, I assure honourable members, with the greatest respect. They are both represented in this country by numerous bodies of men; each opinion is supported by numbers, by intelligence, by property, and by respectability in every sense in which that word can be used. But their dissimilarity is perfectly perceptible. For example, I hold that a Conservative principle which regards the parliamentary settlement of 1832 as a satisfactory settlement. I hold that to be a Conservative principle which, without blind or bigoted adherence to the doctrine on all possible occasions, believes that tampering with the suffrage is a great evil to the state. I believe I am right in saying that it is a Conservative principle which holds that the due influence of property in the exercise of the suffrage is a salutary influence. I think it is a Conservative principle that in any representative scheme the influence of landed property should be sensibly felt. I hold it to be a Conservative principle that we maintain the union between Church and State—that we should not only maintain, but expand



the ecclesiastical institutions of this country. I hold it to be a Conservative principle that the estate of the Church should be respected, and that the Church itself should not be a stipendiary of the civil power. I hold it to be a Conservative principle that we maintain the Church in Ireland, believing that maintenance perfectly reconcilable with the rights and privileges of all classes of Her Majesty's subjects in that kingdom. I hold it to be a Conservative principle to cherish and protect all traditional influences, because they are opposed to a crude centralization, and because they are the source of an authority at once beneficent and economical. I hold it to be a Conservative principle that would respect existing corporations. (*Ironical cheering.*) Those ironical cheers from the hon. gentlemen opposite convince me that I am right in this estimate, and that there is a body in this country which, though I scarcely had expected it, is even represented in this House, and which holds opinions exactly the reverse of those which I have stated. (*Cheers from the Treasury bench.*) Those cheers from the ministerial benches show that there is in this country, and even in this House, a body who believe that the parliamentary settlement of 1832 ought not to be maintained—that it arrests the progress of the movement they desire to see; a body who believe that the influence of property on the exercise of the suffrage, which we regard as wholesome, ought to be prevented; a body who, instead of cherishing and encouraging, hold the influence of landed property in the representation of the country to be an influence which ought not to be encouraged, but rather to be checked. I have no fear of misrepresenting the opinions of honourable members opposite, when I say that there are those among them who look at least with suspicion upon the union between Church and State, and who, if they bow to it, bow to it only because it is established; who are not in favour of expanding—indeed scarcely of maintaining—our ecclesiastical institutions;

who would willingly see the Church a stipendiary of the civil power; who are opposed to traditional influences (*Hear!*); who, as the cheer of the hon. gentleman assures us, would rather, instead of a free magistracy, have a magistracy framed upon what they consider more precise principles, but in my opinion principles not so favourable as the present to the preservation of the public liberties of the country. I do not find fault with honourable gentlemen for entertaining such opinions; I am trying to state them fairly; but their assent to my exposition proves that I am right in my assumption, that in this country there are two great parties, each representing distinctive principles."

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to show that a similar difference of opinion existed between Liberals and Conservatives upon the question of foreign politics. "I have always considered," he said, "in respect to foreign affairs, that there were three great questions upon which it becomes any man who aspires to be a statesman in this country, as well as of any parliamentary party which incurs the responsibility of supporting particular individuals, to have clear and precise ideas. These three subjects are—the Russian empire, the Austrian empire, and our relations with the United States of America. There is no doubt a class of persons in this country who have always looked with great jealousy upon the expansion and the policy of the Russian empire; and when we went to war with Russia the object of that party—the avowed object, which they upheld with energy, eloquence, and earnestness—was the necessity of dismembering the Russian empire. For my own part, I have always been of opinion that the dismembering of the Russian empire is not an object which any statesman ought to propose to himself; that the dismemberment of the Russian empire could not be attained—even if we were successful in attaining it at all—without one of those long wars which might fatally exhaust the energies



and lower the character of this country in the scale of nations; and even if the dismemberment took place, we should find that the ultimate result would be, that the balance of power in Europe would be distributed in a manner prejudicial to our interests. That I take to be the Conservative view upon this question, as opposed to the views of the other section. I apprehend that there are in this country two distinct opinions, each supported by powerful parties, on this question of foreign policy. Take, again, the case of the Austrian empire. I hold that it is the Conservative opinion that the maintenance of the Austrian empire is necessary to the independence, and, if necessary to the independence, necessary to the civilization and even to the liberties of Europe. There is a contrary opinion to that. A great party in this country is of opinion, that from the dismemberment of the Austrian empire very great political advantages might be obtained, not for this country only, but for the whole civilized world. I will now bring you to a question which has recently been engaging our attention—to Italy. Just as the dismemberment of the Russian empire involves the question of the restoration of Poland and Finland, so the dismemberment of the Austrian empire involves the question of the independence of Hungary and the emancipation of Italy. Are we to be told that upon these subjects there are no different opinions in this country? Is there a single gentleman who is not conscious that, even to-morrow, he may be called upon to vote upon these questions—questions upon which the whole policy of the country depends? I hold it to be a Conservative principle to believe, that if we, or any other power, should forcibly interfere in the affairs of Italy, with the view of changing the political settlement of that country, the result will be, as in the case of an attempt to dismember Russia, one of those protracted wars that might fatally exhaust this country, and which, even

supposing it to be successful, would leave Italy, very possibly not in the possession of Austria, but under the dominion of some other power as little national. Let us look next to our relations with the United States. What is your policy with respect to that country? There are those who view with the utmost jealousy, and regard in a litigious spirit, the progress of the United States of America—who think that any advance in their power, or any expansion of their territory, is opposed to the commercial interest, and perhaps also to the political influence of England. But I am not of that opinion. I am of a contrary opinion. . . . I cannot forget that the United States, though independent, are still in some sense colonies, and are influenced by colonial tendencies; and when they come in contact with large portions of territory scarcely populated, or at the most sparsely occupied by an indolent and unintelligent race of men, it is impossible—and you yourselves find it impossible—to resist the tendency to expansion; and expansion in that sense is not injurious to England, for it contributes to the wealth of this country (let us say this in a whisper, lest it cross the Atlantic) more than it diminishes the power of the United States. In our foreign relations with the United States, therefore, I am opposed to that litigious spirit of jealousy which looks upon the expansion of that country and the advance of these young communities with an eye of jealousy and distrust.\*

\* Some few weeks before (June 16, 1856), Mr. Disraeli had given expression to similar sentiments. Our relations with the United States were at this time somewhat strained, owing to disputes as to affairs in Central America, and as to the fashion in which we had carried out the clauses of the Foreign Enlistment Act. He wished to know, inquired Mr. Disraeli, what was the cause of those painful and frequently recurring misunderstandings between England and the United States? He wanted to know why the United States, even admitting their case to be a good one, were so prompt, if not eager, to insist upon immediate reparation? He thought it would be wise if England would at last recognize that the United States, like all the great countries of Europe, had a policy, and that they had a right to have a policy. It was foolish for England to regard with jealousy any legitimate extension of the territory of the United States beyond the bounds which were originally fixed. If it were always to be impressed upon England that she was to look upon every expansion of the United States



When I am told that parties are broken up, I reply that the Conservative party in this country retains the opinions that it always professed, and is prepared to stand by those opinions."

But, laughed Mr. Disraeli, though the Conservatives were in existence, he should like to know what had become of the Liberal party? If it existed, by whom was it represented? The prime minister was not a Liberal, for he held all the opinions entertained by the Conservatives. He approved of the parliamentary settlement of 1832, and of the just influence of property on the exercise of the franchise; he supported the Irish church establishment; he had on every occasion cherished and promoted traditionary influences; he had upheld the free magistracy of the country. In his foreign policy—in spite of former opinions—both he and his colleagues had in their dealings with Russia, with Austria, with Italy, and with the United States, carried out the teaching and the policy of Conservatism.

"Well, sir," concluded Mr. Disraeli, "I cannot but think, under the circumstances, that the government of which the noble lord is the head is Conservative. Whether I look to subjects of internal interest on the conduct which it has pursued with respect to the high questions of foreign policy, I do not see that Her Majesty's government, in pursuing the course they did, were pursuing any other than a course in harmony with Conservative principles and Conservative practice. But because Her Majesty's government have pursued

as an act detrimental to British interests, she would be pursuing a course which, while it would not prevent that expansion on the part of the United States, would involve her in struggles that might prove of a disastrous character. He then instanced the case of California. With what jealousy the conquest of California by the States was regarded in England, yet none of the gloomy forebodings had been realized, but, on the contrary, the conquest had been of the greatest benefit to the British empire. He felt sure that, when once the United States saw that England was no longer jealous of the legitimate development of their power, all these disputes and angry discussions between the two countries would cease. It was the business of a statesman to recognize the necessity of an increase in the power of the States.

such a course, are we justified in saying that parties are broken up? It may be very convenient to some persons to promulgate such a theory. It may be very convenient to some that such rumours should be believed; but I protest against their authenticity. I apprehend that there is a Conservative party and a Conservative policy; and if the noble lord and his colleagues are pursuing that policy, the inference is erroneous that the Conservative party is extinct. What party is really extinct it is not for me now to say. I would rather leave that question to the inference and the critical conclusion of the House and the country. I know it may be said that it would be more straightforward, and more in accordance with the genius of the people of this country, that the Conservative policy should be carried out by those who are avowedly Conservatives; but what I say is, that we who maintain Conservative opinions, and who deplore the consequences of a parliamentary session like that now closing, that we have two sources of consolation in the present state of affairs. In the first place, we have what I think should be, and what I have no doubt will be, the greatest consolation to us—to see our opinions prevalent in high places. The second, which is scarcely less important, is that the inevitable consequence of the existing system will be an injurious influence upon the position of our rivals—the Liberal party. No party can long exist where its chief and selected men are in power and continue to hold office, not only without carrying their principles into effect, but without even frankly avowing their profession. I see before me many members of the administration who obtained their seats in this House by their protestations to their constituents—by their Liberal engagements to the great Liberal party; but who having adopted a Conservative policy, still retain their seats in that administration. It is for them to explain their position to their constituents, and to the party in the country whom they are



supposed to represent. But I would say to the Conservative party, Do not lose heart; if this system continues, the Liberal party will be thrown back fifty years; nothing can long resist the deleterious influence of the position in which they are now placed with reference to the possession of power. We have, then, these two sources of consolation; and the people of this country will, upon reflection, soon discover what is the reason that measures of great public necessity are not passed in this House, though they are proposed by a minister. They will find upon reflection, that from the competitive emulation of great political parties has sprung that wise and temperate system of government which has so long characterized the history of this country; they will cherish with still greater interest, and they will value still more highly, the distinctive principles which form parties. At any rate, when we are told—as we have been told for the last six months—that the present lamentable state of public affairs is occasioned by the break up of parties, we at least can say, ‘That allegation does not apply to us; we are a Conservative party; we hold Conservative opinions; we are prepared to maintain them; and if a minister who has no opinions cannot pass his measures, he has no right—and those who defend him have no right—to libel the constitution of the country to which we owe all our reputation and our greatness.’ The motion was agreed to, and three days afterwards this session of pledges unfulfilled, and hopes raised only to be disappointed, came to an end.

On the conclusion of the war, the country had expected that the attention of the government would be directed to questions of domestic reform, and that continental politics would cease to occupy the prominent position lately accorded them. Lord Palmerston, however, could not refrain from mixing himself up with what Mr. Disraeli called the “little difficulties” of the hour. There was the “little difficulty” with Persia, owing to the Persian occupa-

tion of Herat; there was the “little difficulty” with central Italy, owing to the treatment of political prisoners by the king of Naples; there was the “little difficulty” between Prussia and Switzerland as to Neuchâtel; and now a “little difficulty” had arisen as to our relations with China. Mr. Disraeli strongly objected to the course Lord Palmerston had pursued in dealing with foreign questions which did not directly bear upon the interests of England. A foreign policy is necessarily a policy of foreign interference; yet it does not follow that foreign interference is consequently a legitimate foreign policy. The policy of Lord Palmerston was that of foreign interference—an interference more intrusive than aggressive, yet perfectly sufficient to disquiet the public mind. On the opening of parliament (February 3, 1837), Mr. Disraeli alluded to this meddlesome conduct of the cabinet. “We had a right to suppose,” said he, “that Her Majesty’s ministers, after having weaned the mind of this country from the excitement which war always engenders, would no longer have permitted the attention of the people to be diverted and distracted from the consideration of our domestic affairs; that well-matured and well-considered measures of economical and administrative improvement would have been prepared during the recess and submitted to the consideration of parliament, and that we should have been enabled to look forward to the attainment of that which is usually supposed to be a necessary consequence of peace—to a mitigation of the public burdens, so that the capital and the labour of the country might adapt themselves with increased energy to the opening which had been offered for their employment.” Instead of which, he remarked, there was nothing but “wars and rumours of wars” in the speech from the throne, and allusions implying a want of confidence on the part of the cabinet in foreign governments, for which there was no occasion. He hoped that the glory of the late war would not induce the country



to sanction extravagant military establishments. It was not advisable that England should become what was called "a great military nation," though of course it was necessary to establish those sources from which an effective army could at all times and in due season be raised. The attention of the government should be occupied, not in meddling with continental politics, but in the revision of taxation. The question of the income tax was a most important one. In 1853 Mr. Gladstone had promised that the tax should cease in 1860, and in his opinion the settlement of 1853 should be adhered to. So convinced was he, continued Mr. Disraeli, of the necessity of that step, that he would, a few days hence, move "that taxes which had been granted in time of war for the purpose of carrying on hostilities, by way of income tax, should not be levied in time of peace."

This promise was faithfully kept. Pursuant to notice Mr. Disraeli moved (February, 20, 1857), "That in the opinion of this House it would be expedient, before sanctioning the financial arrangements for the ensuing year, to adjust the estimated income and expenditure in the manner which shall appear best calculated to secure the country against the risk of a deficiency in the years 1858-59 and 1859-60, and to provide for such a balance of revenue and charge respectively in the year 1860 as may place it in the power of parliament at that period, without embarrassment to the finances, altogether to remit the income tax." For such an inquiry there was every just ground. The object of the resolution of Mr. Disraeli was to abolish the income tax in 1860 by a wholesome reduction in the national expenditure. That expenditure had considerably increased since the war, and it had become impossible to deal with the subject properly unless the reasons of this expenditure were analyzed. Mr. Disraeli began by criticising the budget which the chancellor of the exchequer had recently introduced, and showed that in the year 1858-59 there would be a

deficiency of £5,000,000, and again in the year 1859-60, a deficiency of at least £10,000,000; yet in 1860 the income tax, yielding £7,000,000, was to be taken off. How could such a tax be remitted, he asked, at a time when so colossal a deficiency would have to be grappled with? Under those circumstances, he had thought it his duty to introduce the resolution now before the House. If they were menaced by a deficiency, what could be more judicious than to proceed upon that excellent principle of finance which adjusted the estimated income and expenditure in such a way as was best calculated to prevent a deficiency, and then to provide in the best manner they could for enabling parliament, in the year 1860, to remit the whole of the income tax, as was promised to the country in 1853? That promise ought to be kept. "Sir," said Mr. Disraeli, "with regard to the income tax, I am not one, and I think I have shown I am not one, who will resist a fair introduction of direct taxation in our system. But I say direct taxation has never taken a more intolerable form than in the income tax. It has been condemned by the voice of the country, and the decision and policy of this House. I need not enter into the catalogue of its enormities—that it is unjust, unequal, inquisitorial. There are few who have listened to me who have not had personal proof of these qualities of the tax. They are grievances which are not to be borne, and in time of peace the income tax as a paramount feature of our taxation cannot be endured. In a national emergency these grievances are not felt. At such a moment private grievances are absorbed in public patriotism, and no one thinks of the injustice, the inequality, and the inquisitorialness of a tax, if he believes that the honour or existence of the country is at stake. In such an emergency no one criticises a tax; but just in proportion as it is exempt from criticism at a period of public danger, the moment a period of tranquillity returns you will find a reaction



of odium to that degree that the tax is perhaps more criticised than it deserves. But the result is that the income and property tax is the most odious form of direct taxation, and I protest against that easy mode of argument which prevails, and which holds that any person who opposes the income tax is opposed to direct taxation. When I oppose it, it is as the most odious form of direct taxation." Mr. Disraeli then concluded by saying that he was for wise and not wild reduction—for reduction with a definite object founded on definite knowledge. His resolution was peculiarly adapted to the position in which they found themselves. They wanted something that was clear in words and definite in expression. "Let us, therefore," he said, "carry out this resolution, which in my humble judgment lays down the right principle on which our finance should always rest—the fundamental and cardinal principle of finance, to which this House should ever adhere; let us require that before we sanction the financial arrangements of the government, we shall see the estimated income and expenditure adjusted in the manner best calculated to secure the country against the risk of a deficiency."

On a division, though Mr. Gladstone supported the resolution, the motion of Mr. Disraeli was lost by a majority of eighty. It was felt by the House that it would be wiser to go first into the estimates and then ascertain what reductions could be made. The motion of Mr. Disraeli was looked upon as an abstract resolution, which stopped the House from discussing the budget in committee.

The anticipated deficiency in the exchequer was not likely to be reduced by intelligence which was now received from China. In the extreme east of Asia we had another "little difficulty." Thanks to the hasty instructions of the government, and to the still hastier conduct of a civil

ere engaged in active hostilities  
od of Canton. The cause  
chiefly stated, was as fol-

lows:—Early in the October of the preceding year, the *Arrow*, a "lorcha"—a vessel so called after the Portuguese settlement at Macao, and signifying that it was a ship built upon European lines—was boarded in the Canton river by certain Chinese officers. Of the crew, twelve were taken prisoners on a charge of having been concerned in piracy; whilst two men, the remainder of the crew, were left in custody of the ship. Upon the matter coming to the knowledge of Mr. Parkes, the English consul at Canton, he made a demand from the governor of Canton, claiming the return of the captured men on the ground that, by the clauses in the treaty between England and China, any pirates or others found on board of a British vessel, and claimed by the Chinese authorities, should be demanded from the English consul, and not be forcibly removed by Chinese officers from a British ship. The whole question turned upon the point whether the "lorcha" was a British or Chinese vessel. The matter was referred to Sir John Bowring, the English plenipotentiary at Hong Kong, who at once decided that the ship was a British barque, and officially declared that unless the captured crew were released and an apology offered for the conduct of the Chinese officers, together with a promise that no such act should be repeated in the future, naval operations would be immediately commenced against the Chinese. On October 22nd the whole of the imprisoned crew were returned; and a letter was despatched, in which Commissioner Yeh, the governor of the province, stated that the "lorcha" was not a British ship, that the English had really no concern in the matter; but that out of courtesy he had returned the men at the instance of the consul. This response was not considered satisfactory by the militant Sir John Bowring. The very day after the reply of Governor Yeh, operations were commenced against the Barrier Forts on the Canton river. This was but the beginning of destruction. The Barrier Forts, the Bogue Forts, the Blenheim Forts,



and the Dutch Folly Forts, and numerous junks, were taken and blown up before the first fortnight in November. Then the suburbs of Canton were attacked, and our artillery was busy shelling the town itself. China was indignant and exasperated, and a loud outcry was raised at home against this unjustifiable destruction and needless devastation.

The whole business came before parliament. Upon inquiry it transpired that the Chinese authorities had been throughout in the right, and that the English plenipotentiary at Hong Kong had acted in the matter with nefarious promptitude. There had been no grounds, it was discovered, for the warfare and devastation then being carried on in the Canton river. The *lorcha Arrow* was in no respect a British ship. She was built in China, she was owned by the Chinese, she was manned by Chinese, and she was engaged in piracy contrary to the interests of China. In defence it was said that if the *lorcha* were a Chinese vessel, she had obtained a registry which entitled her to fly the British flag, and thus claim British protection; but upon further investigation even this weak defence broke down, for it was ascertained that the *Arrow* had failed to renew the license granting her the registry, and had thus at the time of her capture no right whatever to hoist the British flag. In both Houses the conduct of the plenipotentiary at Hong Kong was severely animadverted upon. Sir John Bowring was a very able, a very opinionated, and a very domineering man. He had acquired a considerable knowledge of China from long residence as consul at Canton; and on a vacancy occurring in the office of plenipotentiary and superintendent of trade at Hong Kong, he was considered the best man to be appointed to the post. Some cynical amusement was created when it was afterwards made public that this arrogant and combative man, who throughout the dispute was always in the wrong, and who had issued the haviest orders to massacre inoffensive Chinese and shell

unprotected towns, had acted, before he entered the service of the state, as secretary of the Peace Society.

On February 24, 1857, Lord Derby, in a brilliant speech, brought forward a motion in the Upper House condemning the conduct of the British authorities in China. In spite of the support the vote of censure received from Lord Lyndhurst and others, the motion was defeated by a majority of 146 to 110. Two days later Mr. Cobden, in the House of Commons, proposed the following resolution:—"That this House has heard with concern of the conflicts which have occurred between the British and Chinese authorities in the Canton river; and, without expressing an opinion as to the extent to which the government of China may have afforded this country cause of complaint respecting the non-fulfilment of the treaty of 1842, this House considers that the papers which have been laid upon the table fail to establish satisfactory grounds for the violent measures resorted to at Canton in the late affair of the *Arrow*; and that a select committee be appointed to inquire into the state of our commercial relations with China." In the course of the debate, which lasted four nights, and which engaged the attention of the most eminent members of the House, it became evident that the ex-secretary of the Peace Society had acted with more than the usual amount of combative interference characteristic of that pugnacious association. It was proved that Sir John Bowring had taken more upon himself than the occasion justified; that he was aware that the "*lorcha*" had no claim to British protection, and in his correspondence had designedly suppressed that fact; and that the Chinese had given no cause for the hostilities which had ensued. The government at home was also accused of an improper exercise of the authority of the crown in the matter, since it was the province of a wise government to correct the over-zeal of its agents. The motion of Mr. Cobden was supported by members on both sides of the House; by



Mr. Disraeli and Mr. Gladstone; by Lord John Russell and Sir Bulwer Lytton; by Mr. Roebuck and Mr. Roundell Palmer; by Lord Robert Cecil and Mr. Milner Gibson; by Sir Frederick Thesiger and Mr. Sidney Herbert. Against this combination of men "who had for a long course of time been kept apart by the strongest differences of opinion, and by recollections of resentments even not now entirely forgotten," Lord Palmerston was very wroth. He sneered at it as "a coalition," a "factions combination," a "cowardly arrangement," which in no way represented the feelings of the nation. The country he was sure, if appealed to, would be with him, and not with the coalition his opponents had formed themselves into. His prediction proved to be correct.

At the close of the fourth night of the debate, Mr. Disraeli (March 3, 1857) addressed the House. The motion brought forward by Mr. Cobden appeared to him, he said, both moderate and definite, and he was prepared to regard it as a vote of censure upon the government. He thought it more for the honour of the House of Commons that it should be so looked upon, than that it should be considered as a mere vote of censure upon certain absent officials. "I am not going to enter," he said, "into any of the legal arguments which have been adduced; and I must admit my surprise that the debate has been so lengthened by the introduction of the legal element, because it appears to me that a few observations would dispose of the whole of that part of the subject. In the first place, if the *Arrow* had been a British ship, built at Blackwall, owned by an Englishman, and manned by British seamen, I do not think the government would have been authorized in taking the course which they adopted; and in the second place, the representatives of England in China were unable to take their stand upon the case which they originally stated, and were driven to placing the whole matter on a very different issue. On both grounds our position is equally

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untenable, and therefore I think that the legal part of the question as regards the *Arrow* is not material. It has all along been a question not of law, but of policy, and it is to this question of policy I shall briefly address myself." It was not a question, he said, whether Sir John Bowring had spoken falsely, or Commissioner Yeh was a liar. The conduct of Sir John had been ratified, sanctioned, and approved by the government, and therefore the conduct of that official ought not to be reviewed by the House of Commons. It was not the behaviour of the plenipotentiary at Hong Kong, but the policy of the government, that they should criticise and discuss. And what was that policy? It was an attempt by force to gain entrance into Canton, and thus to increase our commercial relations with the East. "There is one idea too prevalent with regard to China," said Mr. Disraeli, "namely, that all England has to do is to act with energy in order to produce the same results as have been achieved in India. Fifty years ago Lord Hastings offered to conquer China with 20,000 men. So great a captain as the Marquis of Hastings might have succeeded; but since the time when our Clives and Hastings founded our Indian empire, the position of affairs in the East has greatly changed. Great powers have been brought into contact with us in the East. We have the Russian empire and the American republic there, and a system of political compromise has developed itself like the balance of power in Europe; and if you are not cautious and careful in your conduct now in dealing with China, you will find that you are likely not to extend commerce, but to excite the jealousy of powerful states, and to involve yourselves in hostilities with nations not inferior to yourselves. . . . If that is the true state of affairs, this country must dismiss from its mind the idea of dealing, as barbarous and uncivilized, with states with which powers like ourselves have sympathies; and we must habituate ourselves to the idea of extend-



ing to countries like China the same diplomatic intercourse that we adopt with other nations. You cannot do that in a moment, it must be a work of time. . . . You are dealing with a country of immense antiquity. You have been reminded in the debate that China enjoys a civilization of twenty-five centuries. In point of antiquity the civilization of Europe is nothing to that. But the result of those ancient habits and customs is an existence of profound ceremony and formal etiquette; and yet you expect that such a country will not be startled by the frank and occasionally, I am sorry to say, the brutal freedom of European manners. With a policy of combination with other powerful European states in attempting to influence the conduct of the Chinese by negotiations and treaties, it is my belief that ultimately slowly but surely we may attain our end; but it is because the actual policy of the government—the policy approved and vindicated by the noble lord—seems to me inconsistent with the policy of combination with other European states, that I think the time has arrived for the House of Commons to express an opinion upon events so startling, and upon behaviour so inconsistent with such a profession."

Mr. Disraeli then commented in severe terms upon the accusation made by Lord Palmerston, that the motion brought forward by Mr. Cobden had been the result of factious combinations and concerted movements; in his closing remarks he indulged in one of those personal attacks which always irritated the victim and tickled the House. "We have been told, sir," he said, "of party moves. I really think the time has come when both sides of the House should cease indulging in these platitudes. Why, sir, everything is a party move in a House which ought to be ruled by party, and which, if not ruled by party, would soon lose all its significance. What is a party but a body of men who have a policy which they recommend, and who do not shrink from the responsibility of putting

that policy into practice? But really there has been no party move on the present occasion. A resolution has been brought forward by the hon. member for the West Riding. On this side of the House it has received considerable, but not unanimous support. I have the misfortune to differ on this occasion from many gentlemen with whom I act in political life, and among whom are some of my most intimate friends in private life. If I look to the benches opposite, I find there the noble lord the member for the city. He is also a party to this unprincipled combination. I really think that the first minister should settle his courteous description with his late much-cherished and honoured colleague, and not with me. There are also gentlemen opposite who once did act in very intimate connection with the Conservative party, and the apprehension that that intimacy should be renewed has conjured up before the first minister a combination at once the most horrible and the most heterogeneous. The first minister is, of all men, the man who cannot bear a coalition. Why, he is the archetype of political combinations without avowed principles! See how his government is formed. It was only last year that every member of his cabinet, in this House, supported a bill introduced, I think, by a late colleague. It was opposed in the other House by a member of the government, who, to excuse his apparent inconsistency, declared that when he took office the first minister required no pledge from him on any subject whatever. Yet the noble lord is alarmed and shocked at this unprincipled combination! The noble lord cannot bear coalitions. The noble lord has acted only with those amongst whom he was born and bred in politics! That infant Hercules was taken out of a Whig cradle! And how consistent has been his political life! Looking back upon the past half century, during which he has professed almost every principle and connected himself with almost every party, the noble lord has raised a warning voice to-night



against coalitions, because he fears that a majority of the House of Commons, ranking in its numbers some of the most eminent members of this House—men who have been colleagues of the noble lord—may not approve a policy with respect to China, which has begun in outrage, and which, if pursued, will end in ruin. That, sir, is the position of the noble lord. And what defence of that policy have we had from the noble lord? Has he laid down a single principle on which our relations with China ought to depend? Has he enunciated a solitary political maxim which should guide us in this moment of peril and anxiety? On the contrary, he has covered a weak and shambling case by saying—what?—that he is the victim of a conspiracy. It is the old story. How often does a prisoner at the bar, when he is in the unfortunate position of having no defence, declare that the whole thing is a conspiracy? . . . . .

Accustomed to majorities which have been obtained without the assertion of a single principle, which have, indeed, been the consequence of an occasional position, and which have in fact originated in the noble lord's sitting on that bench without the necessity of expressing an opinion upon any subject, foreign or domestic, that can interest the heart of the country or influence the opinion of the nation, the noble lord at last finds that the time has come when, if he be a statesman, he must have a policy; and that it will not do, the instant that the blundering of his cabinet is detected, and every man accustomed to influence the opinion of the House unites in condemning it, to complain to the country that he is the victim of conspiracy. Let the noble lord not only complain to the country, but let him appeal to the country. I hope my constituents will return me again; if they do not, I shall be most happy to meet him on the hustings at Tiverton. I should like to see the programme of the proud leader of the Liberal party—'No Reform! New Taxes! Canton Blazing! Persia Invaded!' That would be the programme of the states-

man who appeals to a great nation as the worthy leader of the cause of progress and civilization."

The House was of the same opinion as Mr. Disraeli. On a division the resolution of Mr. Cobden was carried, and ministers defeated by a majority of sixteen—Ayes, 263; Noes, 247.

The cabinet thus subjected to a vote of censure, two courses were open to the prime minister—to resign office, or to appeal to the country. Lord Palmerston preferred the latter alternative. The case, he said in his ministerial explanation, seemed to him to be of so peculiar a character that he had not thought it his duty to retire from power. He proposed, however, to dissolve parliament and appeal to the constituencies, as soon as the state of public business admitted the adoption of such a course. To this arrangement Mr. Disraeli cordially assented. He considered such a proceeding advantageous to the public interest, and pledged himself to give every possible facility to the progress of public business. He was of opinion that the appeal to the country would be of great advantage to the public service. "I do think," he said (March 5, 1857), "that it is of the utmost importance to the character of parliament, and to the interests of the realm, that parliamentary parties should be more defined than they have been. I am myself persuaded that that habit which has of late been much in vogue of decrying the influence of party has had a very injurious effect upon the conduct of public affairs. Party, well defined and well appreciated, is the best guarantee for public and private honour; and I trust that when this recurrence to the sense of the country has taken place, members will be returned to this House with definite opinions; that we shall know who is prepared to change and who is ready to maintain the institutions of the country; who is in favour of the reduction of the burdens of the people, and who is in favour of increasing them; who is in favour of a foreign policy which, while it main-



[illegible]

and his party had pursued in the past. The two most important portions of his speech on this occasion were those which related to the Vienna negotiations and to the cry, then becoming more and more pronounced, for reform. With reference to the transactions at Vienna he said, "We have been told that Lord Palmerston took the reins in a moment of difficulty, and carried on the war with great efficiency. Yes, but it should be remembered that when he took the reins he commenced negotiations for an ignominious peace. He sent Lord John Russell to Vienna with instructions to negotiate for peace. I have heard it stated, and I believe it is a fact, that the instructions to Lord John Russell were drawn up by Lord Palmerston's own hand; and I think it highly probable that the most experienced statesman we have would not fail in performing such a duty. It did so happen, however, that, although the negotiations were secret, somebody told me the terms of them, and I formed the conclusion that they would be most unsatisfactory to the people, and most injurious to the interests and honour of the country. My information, though accurate, was not complete, and I brought forward a motion in the House of Commons asking it to come to the resolution that the ambiguous language and uncertain conduct of Her Majesty's representative at Vienna were sources of great anxiety to parliament. That resolution, brought forward on the eve of the Whitsuntide holidays, was defeated by a great majority of the House—a majority of 100—and the reason was, that Lord John Russell had returned and made a warlike speech, and was supported by the prime minister with so much cordiality, that the House of Commons did not think that the impression I wished to convey was justifiable. But it subsequently appeared that the French plenipotentiary who had consented to those terms, annoyed that the negotiations had failed, resigned his office. I then revealed, in my own vindication, all that had occurred, and when parliament

met after the holidays, some of the members who voted against my motion expressed their deep regret that they had adopted that course. The consequence was, that I asked a distinguished friend of mine (Sir Bulwer Lytton) to bring the whole subject forward. What was the consequence? The existence of the government was at stake, and the House would have terminated its existence had it not been that Lord John Russell saved it by making himself the voluntary scapegoat of the government. I will do Lord Palmerston the justice to state that he offered to stand or fall by Lord John Russell; but as the majority would have been overwhelming, Lord John offered to be the scapegoat, and the government was saved. In justice to Lord John Russell, it is necessary I should say, that in my opinion he was not responsible for those terms, but that the responsibility rested with the cabinet and the prime minister. I mention these things to show that we did not deviate from the patriotic course of the Opposition, and to show that some credit is due to the parliamentary Opposition of England during the governments of Lords Aberdeen and Palmerston."

During the election the subject of parliamentary reform had been freely discussed, and it was evident that within a few months the question would have to be seriously entertained by any ministry that was in power. Mr. Disraeli shortly expressed his views upon the matter. He did not, he said, believe the people were much in earnest in their demand for it. The talk they had heard during the last fortnight was more the excitement of the hustings, than the expression of earnest feeling on the part of any large body of the people. The state of parties, however, was likely to give reform greater prominence than it had lately. Then came the question as to what measure of reform they ought to have. The moderate Reformers were in favour of bit-by-bit reform; the earnest and real Reformers demanded comprehensive measures. For his part he was opposed to all



bit-by-bit reforms, because he found that, however plausible they might appear, they always ended in a job. He considered the Reform Act of 1832 a one-sided measure, as it abolished the Tory rotten boroughs, but left the Whig rotten boroughs intact. He voted for the extinction of the Whig rotten boroughs—Calne, Tavistock, Westbury, and the rest. But what he would not do was to propose or consent to the abolition of the distinction between counties and boroughs, and the division of the country into electoral districts. "Blot Buckinghamshire out of the political map?" "No!" he cried. To him Buckinghamshire was hallowed ground. "My opinion," he said, "is that the traditions of particular localities go to form part of the national character, and that a man who sees the road which Hampden ascended with the petition of rights is proud that he lives in a locality so intimately connected with the history of his country; that if you see a temple dedicated to the eloquence of Chatham at Stowe, you rejoice to find that the county of Buckingham is associated with so great a character; and that you cannot go to Beaconsfield, and view the oak under which Burke matured his reflections on the French Revolution, without entertaining a feeling of exultation that your county was the scene of meditations which so powerfully influenced the mind of Europe."

Having stated his objections to these measures, he proceeded as follows:—"With respect to the ballot, all persons who have considered the subject must agree that the ballot is impossible unless accompanied with a great extension of the suffrage. It would be insupportable and intolerable that those who enjoy the privilege of voting should exercise it in secret, without being subject to that control and supervision which the possessors of other privileges have. Admitting, then, that if you have the ballot, you must also have extension of the suffrage, you will have another important question to consider, namely, whether you will accompany the

ballot with plurality of voting? Do you mean to say that the lord-lieutenant of the county, for instance, is to have no more voice at an election than some individual in his service whose weekly wages might entitle him to live in a house of sufficient value to give him a vote? Where is the line to be drawn? Is one man to have fifty votes, according to his property, and another man only one? If every man is to have a vote, property will have no influence at an election for members, and you abandon the principle of representation and taxation. If every man is to have a vote, and is to exercise it in secret, you will change the whole character of England, political and social. It has been tried in France and in other countries, and it has not answered, and I do not believe it will answer here. The reason why your parliament has remained so long is, that it has hitherto consisted of men to whom the great body of the country has looked up with respect. You may have a fleeting and a vagabond population in parliament. Men may come in by accident—they will go out by accident; but if a man has been long in parliament, I care not whether he be Whig, Tory, or Radical, he has some root in the sympathies of his fellow-countrymen. In France they had a parliament elected by universal suffrage, but when it did not do exactly what was wanted of it, the people rose and said, 'Who are you?—We are as good as you,' and in the end a military despotism was established, and that appears to be the only government of which that great and intelligent people are capable. I fear that if you adopt the example of other countries, where the ballot has been tried, the end will be that you will change your parliament till it become a thing that you will despise."

Not every member was as fortunate as Mr. Disraeli. Lord Palmerston had rightly interpreted the feelings of the people. The cause he advocated was one upon which it has seldom proved a bad "cry" to go to the country. It was said that the flag



of England had been insulted, that the proud name of England had been dragged through the mire by a set of miserable barbarians, and that Palmerston the stout Englishman, the true minister of England, had resolved upon avenging the honour of his country, and upon making those who had attempted to tarnish her fair fame bitterly rue their rashness. According to the eloquence of the hustings there were but two parties in the state—the one which upheld the name and pride of England, the other which was indifferent to the sublime emotions and just anger of outraged patriotism. To affirm that Sir John Bowring was in the wrong; that the government, in upholding his policy, had acted contrary to the principles of international law; that the Chinese had a perfect right to suppress piracy around their own coasts; that if the right to fly the English flag in Chinese waters was to justify misdeeds, there was nothing to prevent any junk engaged in a nefarious trade hoisting our ensign and escaping scot-free, and other similar palpable statements—was to be un-English, a craven, a sneak, and a peace-at-any-price man. If ever there was a moment when "Jingoism" was rampant throughout the country, it was when the electors of 1857 rallied round Lord Palmerston upon the Chinese question, and upheld the Liberal policy. The interference of the bully was confounded with the statesmanship of the true patriot, and resulted in a great triumph to the prime minister. "Pam" was the hero of the hour, and any one who essayed to disparage his actions was at once snubbed and suppressed. "There never, perhaps," writes his biographer, "was a general election which turned more completely than this one of 1857 on the personal prestige of a minister and the national confidence in one man." The aberration of the moment played sad tricks with the popularity of certain prominent members of parliament. Mr. Cobden declined to contest the West Riding, but fell back upon Huddersfield, where he was completely defeated by an

untried politician; Mr. Bright and Mr. Milner Gibson had to make room at Manchester for Messrs. Potter and Turner; Mr. Cardwell was rejected by Oxford; and Mr. Layard was left out in the cold at Aylesbury. The thin and divided ranks of the Peelites also lost many of their members. On the meeting of the Lower House it was estimated that 189 new members had been returned; that the Conservatives numbered 284, whilst the supporters of the "firebrand minister," as Mr. Disraeli designated Lord Palmerston, were put down at 371.

Shortly after the assembling of the new parliament Mr. Disraeli was afforded an opportunity of displaying his eloquence, upon one of those domestic subjects which especially excite the loyalty of a nation. Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal had become engaged to Prince Frederick William of Prussia, and it was considered that the future marriage would result in a happiness not always consequent upon these dynastic alliances. The Princess Royal was exceedingly popular, and there was but one wish expressed throughout the country, that the union of the daughter would be attended with the same felicity as had blessed the marriage of her illustrious mother. Parliament was requested to make such provision for the princess as would be suitable to the dignity of the crown and the honour of the nation. Unfortunately there was not that unanimity in the House of Commons to be desired upon such an occasion. The chancellor of the exchequer proposed that the princess should receive a dowry of £40,000, and be the recipient of an annuity of £8000. Mr. Roebuck moved, by way of amendment, that the marriage portion should consist of a certain fixed sum, and that the annuity should be dispensed with. By voting an annuity the country, he said, might get into what was called "an endangering alliance;" and looking to the large family the nation would have to provide for, it behoved parliament to be just, though generous. Mr. Disraeli



(May 22, 1857) opposed the amendment. He confessed that the matter before the House was one of those subjects upon which unanimity was, if possible, most desirable. "I have always felt, for my own part," he said, "that the crown of England is placed in a somewhat painful position when obliged to make appeals on this or analogous subjects to the liberality of the House of Commons. But, on the other hand, it becomes us always to remember what is the cause of those appeals, and what is that power in the state which renders them necessary. It is the jealousy of parliament, carried in my opinion too far and too rigidly, which has rendered it necessary on every occasion to make those appeals to its aid and assistance, sometimes on matters comparatively insignificant. Remembering that it is the jealousy of parliament which renders such appeals necessary, it becomes us to consider them in a cordial and generous spirit." He then stated the position of the sovereign. She was deprived of sources of supply in the civil list which her grandfather had enjoyed;\* she had lost the revenue derivable from the kingdom of Hanover which her predecessors had possessed; she had to maintain a splendid hospitality; yet in the past no appeal had been made in consequence of any debts incurred by the civil list. They were discussing a trivial

point, and he thought they should arrive at an amicable and unanimous conclusion.

"We must not lose sight of the fact," said Mr. Disraeli, pertinently, "that if that settlement which parliament in its wisdom has thought fit to make in regard to the civil list had not occurred, the crown could have acted in this matter independently of the House, and Her Majesty would have had everything that was necessary for the maintenance and comfort of the royal family immediately at her own command. Inasmuch, however, as the jealousy of parliament in dealing with the hereditary revenues has brought about this state of affairs, it becomes us, if we feel we have a duty to discharge, always to perform that duty in a spirit of liberality, and with an earnest desire that we should be unanimous when an appeal of this kind is made to us upon the responsibility of the government. Sir, I will say nothing of the circumstances under which this royal marriage is about to take place. It does not become me to speak of a personage so near the throne as the illustrious lady who is the immediate subject of this proposition. I believe, however, all will agree that she is one worthy of her family and her country, and that she is calculated to adorn the throne for which she is destined. All who have had the privilege of approaching her bear testimony to the brightness of her mind and to the

\* At the Revolution of 1688, a limit was, for the first time, imposed upon the personal expenditure of the monarch. Formerly it had been the custom for parliament, at the beginning of each reign, to grant to the king the ordinary crown revenues, (the rent of crown lands, the feudal rights, and the proceeds of the post-office and wine licenses), and the produce of taxes voted to the sovereign for life. At the accession of William and Mary parliament fixed the annual revenue of the crown in time of peace at £1,200,000, of which some £700,000 were separately appropriated to what was afterwards called the "Civil List," comprising the personal expenses of the king, the maintenance of the royal household, and the payment of civil offices and pensions. On the accession of George III. that sovereign gave up to the nation his life-interest in the hereditary revenues in return for a fixed civil list of £800,000, afterwards increased to £900,000, "for the support of his household and the honour and dignity of the crown." William IV. surrendered the hereditary revenues and all other sources of revenue which had been enjoyed by his predecessors for a civil list of £510,000, which was to be relieved of most of the charges which belonged to the civil government of the state. On the accession of Her Majesty the civil list was settled on the same principle at the annual sum of £385,000. By this

system of relieving the crown of civil charges the debts upon the civil list formerly incurred by Her Majesty's predecessors have been avoided. The question was again discussed on the marriage of Prince Arthur, when Sir Stafford Northcote, the chancellor of the exchequer, made the following observations:—"The House must bear in mind that in all these matters there has been, as has been frequently stated, something in the nature of a bargain between the crown and the parliament, by which the crown surrendered various hereditary revenues and crown lands to the public service, in exchange receiving the fixed sums which have been granted; and undoubtedly, upon comparison of what the crown might have received and the amount it did receive, it is not the crown, but the nation which has been the gainer. That is shown by an interesting return, known to many members, moved for at the commencement of the present reign. At that time Sir Robert Inglis moved for a return showing what would be the result between 1762 and 1837, and it was found that the amount of the hereditary revenues which passed to the nation was £116,000,000, whereas the amount of the civil list during the same period was £69,000,000, showing £47,000,000 going to the nation at that time. Since then, undoubtedly, the public revenues from crown lands have largely increased."



sweetness of her disposition." Pressure being put upon Mr. Roebuck, he withdrew his amendment, and the annuity was voted.

Let us, whilst on this subject, anticipate a few months. On the occasion of the congratulatory address presented by the House of Commons to the throne upon the marriage of the Princess Royal, Mr. Disraeli, in a few graceful words (February 5, 1858), seconded the motion. "I am sure, sir," he said, "that Her Majesty's faithful Commons never united in an address to the crown with more complete cordiality than they do upon the present occasion. Nothing, in my opinion, has been more remarkable or more interesting in the late unanimous expression of feeling with regard to this royal marriage, on the part of this country, than the strong domestic principle which has pervaded the whole of this great and powerful nation. That feeling is the purest, as it is the strongest, source of social happiness and national power. That general homage was offered, I am sure, on this occasion, principally because there has been a conviction on the part of the country, as the noble lord (Palmerston) will remind us, that this alliance has been brought about not so much by political considerations as from the impulses of nature and affection. That domestic feeling has been strongly exhibited in this country, on the present occasion, from the wishes that have been felt by the nation to express their attachment and respect for the royal parents of our princess; because they have long felt that, under the illustrious roof under which she has dwelt, there is as much respect felt for the happiness of the hearth as for the splendour of the throne. In the new career which opens before the Princess Royal, all those incidents which can combine for the happiness of individuals are present. She certainly bears with her the good wishes of the parliament and people of Great Britain; and when, in due season, she shall fill that brilliant position to which the noble lord has referred, I have no doubt that the

time will come when Englishmen will be as proud of the Queen of Prussia as they now are of the Queen of England."

The national rejoicing consequent upon the news of this engagement was soon damped by the most terrible intelligence which now reached London as to the state of our Indian empire. For some years past statesmen acquainted with the political and religious condition of Hindostan had warned us that among the various races which peopled our eastern peninsula discontent was rife, and that it wanted only a spark to create an explosion which would be felt throughout the country, and place our rule in the greatest jeopardy. Of late years the policy of the different governors-general had tended to excite that general feeling of dissatisfaction. We had deposed dynasties and annexed territories; we had introduced innovations in the religious customs of the people; we had gradually ousted the native element from any share in the control of affairs; and we had acted in many instances, both towards Mohammedan and Hindoo, with the cruelty and arrogance of the despotic conqueror. When men smarting under subjection, and morose from long brooding over their wrongs, resolve upon resistance, the first opportunity which offers is eagerly seized upon to effect their purpose. Such an occasion was now to be presented. At the beginning of the year a new kind of rifle—the Enfield rifle—had been introduced into Bengal for the use of the troops. Special cartridges had to be issued. It was rumoured throughout the peninsula that these cartridges were greased with a mixture of cow's fat and hog's lard. At once the fiercest indignation was excited both in the mind of the Mohammedan, who, like the Jew, regards the hog as unclean and abominable, and in the mind of the Hindoo, who looks upon the cow with especial veneration. The government took the earliest opportunity to calm this agitation by circulating orders that such cartridges were not to be employed. The countermand was useless. The rebel native



only wanted an excuse to rise against the government, and that excuse had been offered. The Bengal regiments at Barrackpore and Berhampore openly mutinied; the leaders were executed and the troops disbanded. At Meerut several of the Bengal native cavalry refused to use the cartridges handed out to them; the offenders were sent to prison. And now the first act in the drama was to be played. The native troops in Meerut broke out into open revolt, shot down their officers, released their comrades from gaol, and made an onslaught upon the inhabitants. Attacked and driven out of the town by the European soldiery, the mutineers fled to Delhi, and there proclaimed the debauched and feeble king Emperor of India, and set English rule at defiance. Rebellion, once aroused, soon assumed the most formidable proportions. By the end of June, 1857, the native troops were in open mutiny at Meerut, Delhi, Ferozepore, Allyghur, Roorkee, Muddanah, Lucknow, Cawnpore, Nussurabad, Neemuch, Hansi, Hissar, Jhansi, Mehidpore, Jullundur, Azimghur, Futteghur, Jaunpore, Bareilly, and Allahabad. As was to be expected from the nature of the revolt, terrible atrocities were committed. Many of the stories that reached Europe were no doubt exaggerated; still, making every allowance for romance, the list of murder, rape, and mutilation was terribly full. Most of us can remember how savage was the vindictiveness with which England listened to the tale of the revolt, and how she burned to deal out the bitterest punishment to the fiends who had massacred her sons, outraged her daughters, and mutilated her young. One passion alone seemed to offer at that time any consolation—the passion of revenge: swift, sure, and almost inhuman in its cry for retribution.

For the first few weeks after the revolt and the capture of Delhi by the rebels, the news as to the extent and progress of the mutiny was brief and conflicting. Mr. Disraeli took the earliest opportunity (June 29, 1857) of catechising the government

upon the condition of the Indian empire. He had heard that the ancient capital of Hindostan was in the possession of the rebels, and he desired ministers to throw some light upon the state of affairs, and to inform the House what they proposed to do in that emergency. He wished to know what was the cause of those great disasters? Had the government been forewarned? Was the cause political or religious; had it originated in the maladministration of affairs or in some burst of fanaticism which ought to have been, perhaps, foreseen, even if it could not have been prevented? Were the civil and military authorities in India in harmony? Those were questions which the House was entitled to ask, and which the cabinet should not shrink from meeting. "No one," he said, "can for a moment shut his eyes to the extreme peril to which at this moment our authority is subject in India; but I cannot say, little as my confidence has been in the government of India, that I take those despairing or desperate views with respect to our position in that country which in moments of danger and calamity are too often prevalent. I would express my opinion—an opinion which I have before expressed in this House—that the tenure by which we hold India is not a frail tenure; but when we consider that that great country is inhabited by twenty-five nations—different in race, different in religion, and different in language—I think it is not easy, perhaps it is not possible, for such heterogeneous elements to fuse into combination. Everything, however, is possible, every disaster is practicable, if there be an inefficient or negligent government. It is to prevent such evils that I think the House of Commons is performing its highest duty, if it takes the earliest opportunity after the intelligence has arrived—intelligence which has produced great alarm in the capital of Her Majesty's empire—of inviting Her Majesty's ministers frankly to express to parliament what, in their opinion, is the cause of the great calamity that has occurred—and, above all, what are the

means which they intend to take—and at once to take—in order to encounter the peril before us, and to prevent the evil consequences which may be apprehended.”

Unfortunately the government, during the first weeks of the mutiny, failed to regard the rebellion in the serious light in which it ought to have been considered. They thought it was but a local outbreak, soon to be suppressed, instead of a widespread and powerful revolt. They were unable to grasp the real causes which had gradually led to the rebellion, and thus entertained scant sympathy with the wants and aspirations of the natives. They were tardy in the despatch of forces; they were unduly sensitive as to the expense to be incurred; and there was throughout, on their part, a lukewarmness which did not befit the occasion. A few days after having put those questions to the government, which he considered had been unsatisfactorily answered, Mr. Disraeli, under cover of a motion for certain papers, again brought the question of India (July 27, 1857) before the House. His speech on that occasion lasted three hours, and for profound acquaintance with the subject, for the lucid marshalling of facts, and for clearness and soundness of inferences drawn from premises that could not be disputed, it is one of the most eloquent and masterly expositions that have ever been contributed to a debate upon Indian affairs. The speech has never been reprinted, and will well repay not only perusal, but careful study. “I hardly know,” he began, “anything more interesting—I am sure there are few things more instructive—than to recall the commencement of great events. It is remarkable how insignificant incidents at the first blush have appeared, which have proved to be pregnant with momentous consequences. A street riot at Boston and at Paris turned out to be the two great revolutions of modern times. Who would have supposed, when we first heard of the rude visit of a Russian sailor, from a port in the Black Seas to Constantinople, that

we were on the eve of a critical war, and the solution of one of the most difficult of political problems? And so some few weeks ago, when it appeared in the newspapers that there was a mutiny in a native regiment in India, I dare say few people read the paragraph. I dare say, indeed, most persons turned for amusement to the more exciting discussions in this House on questions of domestic interest of comparative insignificance; and if the tranquil course of the House of Commons this year have not afforded them even this resource, they were perhaps more interested in the stimulating adventures of the police courts. But, sir, I have always thought if mankind could bring themselves to ponder in time on the commencement of those events that greatly affect their fortunes, it is possible that we might bring to the transaction of affairs more prudence and more energy than are generally exercised, and that probably we might prevent many public disasters.”

It was, therefore, with that object before him that he desired to introduce the subject to the attention of the House, so that they might possess a clear idea of the causes which had led to that unhappy state of things. He did not consider the statements made by the government satisfactory; and if members were of the same opinion, it became the paramount duty of parliament to fully investigate the matter. Ministers had alleged that the revolt was a mere military mutiny, which, when once suppressed, might lead to considerations as to the condition of the Indian army. But was it a military mutiny? Was it a military mutiny, or was it a national revolt? Was the conduct of the troops the consequence of a sudden impulse, or was it the result of an organized conspiracy? Upon the right appreciation of that issue the measures which the cabinet ought to adopt, or parliament ought to sanction, entirely depended. Measures which might be adequate in the case of a military mutiny, would not be adequate to cope with a national revolt. Measures which



might be perfectly competent to deal with conduct which was only the consequence of sudden impulse, would be totally insufficient to deal with conduct which was the consequence of a conspiracy long matured, deeply laid, and extensively ramified. The right understanding, by the House of Commons, of the cause of the present state of affairs in India, was a primary piece of knowledge without which they could not undertake to support any measures that were brought forward for the purpose of terminating the disorders which then existed. He would therefore, continued Mr. Disraeli, address members upon two points. He would ask them first to inquire into the causes of the present state of affairs in India; and when they had arrived at a general conclusion on that point, he would ask them to inquire what were the proper measures, under the circumstances, which should be adopted. Without full knowledge of the causes, no sufficient remedy could be suggested.

Of late years, he stated, a great change had taken place in the government of India. In the olden days, and for a considerable time, the principle of English government in India had been to respect nationality. The conquest of India had always been a favourite topic of conversation. The conquest of a country inhabited by 150,000,000 men, in many instances of warlike habits, could at no time have been an easy achievement. Still, upon that subject the popular notion was inaccurate.

"I deny, sir," exclaimed Mr. Disraeli, "that, in a vulgar sense of the words, we have ever conquered India. We have taken a part in the military operations which have very frequently been conducted upon a great scale in India. The annals of our warfare in India are glorious. Our arms have been victorious in many signal fields and many brilliant campaigns. We have often triumphed over powerful sovereigns, and baffled skilful and dangerous confederacies. But still our conquest of India in the main has been a conquest

of India only in the same sense in which William of Orange conquered England. We have been called in—this happened very frequently in the earlier periods of our Indian history—by populations suffering under tyranny, and we have entered those kingdoms and principalities to protect their religion and their property. It will be found, in that wonderful progress of human events which the formation of our Indian empire presents, that our occupation of any country has been preceded by a solemn proclamation and concluded by a sacred treaty, in which we undertook to respect and maintain inviolate the rights and privileges, the laws and customs, the property and religion of the people whose affairs we were about to administer. Such was the principle upon which our Indian empire was founded; and it is a proud as well as a politic passage in the history of Englishmen, that that principle has been until of late years religiously observed."

All their great Indian statesmen, continued the speaker, had always upheld the principle of maintaining the engagements entered into in proclamations and treaties. Their empire in India was, indeed, founded upon the old principle of *divide et impera*. There were in India so many independent states, so many princes of different races, so many religions, and even so many languages, that if England honestly performed her engagements it was totally impossible to raise a combination which could overwhelm her. What was the cause why the Mohammedans and the Mahrattas failed in India? Because they persecuted the people whom they had conquered on account of their religion, and because they filled their empty treasuries with the confiscated lands of the chief proprietors. England on the contrary always came in with a guarantee not to disturb the land or the faith of her Asiatic empire. It was by a policy founded upon those principles that her power in India was established. The existence of independent native states had been a source, not of embarrassment,



but of security to England; such states were the safety-valves of the empire. But unhappily of late years a new principle had been adopted in the government of India—the principle which destroyed nationality instead of respecting it. Everything in India had been changed. Laws and manners, customs and usages, political organizations, the tenure of property, the religion of the people—everything had been changed, or had aroused a suspicion that change was imminent. “Now, taking the last ten years,” said Mr. Disraeli, “I would range under three heads the various causes which have led, in my opinion, to a general discontent among all classes of that country with our rule. I would describe them thus—First, our forcible destruction of native authority; next, our disturbance of the settlement of property; and thirdly, our tampering with the religion of the people. I believe that, directly or indirectly, all the principal causes of popular discontent or popular disturbance will range under those three heads.”

That charge Mr. Disraeli proceeded exhaustively to substantiate. He dealt with the first topic—the forcible destruction of native authority. He proved that the greed of annexation had been most culpably satisfied. At the conclusion of the great wars in which India had been engaged, her financial condition was most unsatisfactory. The nature of Indian revenue was such that it admitted of no expansion; the great bulk of the revenue was raised from land, and therefore if the revenue was to be increased it was necessary to obtain more territory. That course the East India government pursued. In spite of the law of adoption, which was the very corner stone of Hindoo society, when a native prince died without natural heirs, though a son had been adopted as the successor, the government of India annexed his dominions. In that nefarious manner they had acquired the territories of Sattara, Berar, Jeitpore, Sumbulpore, Jhansi, and other principalities. Yet not content with

such a wholesale system of spoliation, they had, as in the case of Oude, to which he would again refer, annexed dominions which did not lack legitimate successors. Thus his first charge, that of the forcible destruction of native authority, had been made out.

Mr. Disraeli then touched upon the second division of his subject—how the settlement of property had been disturbed by the new system of government. “Remember,” he said, “that the principle of the law of adoption is not solely the prerogative of princes and principalities in India; it applies to every man in Hindostan who has landed property, and who professes the Hindoo religion. The great feudatory or jaghedar who holds his lands by public service to his lord; and the enamdar who holds his land free of all tax, who corresponds, if not precisely, in a popular sense at least, with our freeholder—both of these classes—classes most numerous in India—always on the failure of their natural heirs find in this principle the means of obtaining successors to their estates. Those classes were all touched by the annexation of Sattara. They were touched by the annexation of the territories of the ten inferior but independent princes to whom I have already alluded; and they were more than touched, they were terrified to the last degree, when the annexation of Berar took place. What man was safe? What feudatory, what freeholder who had not a child of his own loins, was safe throughout India? These were not idle fears; they were extensively acted upon and reduced to practice.” The government determined to obtain all it could, not only from princes, but from the people. As it interfered with the rights of the princes, so it interfered with the privileges of the subjects. Much of the land in India, continued Mr. Disraeli, was free from the land tax. Freedom from the land tax in India was far more than equivalent to freedom from the land tax in England, for the land tax in India was the whole



taxation of the state, and therefore no light impost. Large portions of the land in India enjoyed that exemption, and in many instances such privilege dated back to a remote past. The government now interfered in that matter. It was alleged that there were fraudulent claims of exemption, and an inquisition into the titles of landed estates was set on foot. "Now there is no doubt," said Mr. Disraeli, "that during the last nine years the action of these commissions of inquiry into the freehold property of India has been going on at an enormous rate, and immense results have been obtained. Of course it is excessively difficult to arrive at very precise calculations on such matters, clouded in a mystery which can only be penetrated by an authorized investigation; but from information placed before me, and which I would not offer to the House unless I had confidence in it myself, I am induced to believe the amount obtained by the government of India in this manner—that is, by the resumption of estates from their proprietors—is not less, in the Presidency of Bengal alone, than £500,000 a year. Conceive what a capital is represented by such an annual revenue! Conceive the thousands and tens of thousands of estates that must have been resumed by the government from the proprietors, to obtain such a result! This is in Bengal alone; but a commission has also been issued in the Presidency of Bombay, and has been hard at work there. I have been informed—and I would not mention the results unless I had a profound conviction that they are strictly true—that the amount of freehold land resumed by the government of Bombay is not less than £370,000 a year. The Presidency of Madras remains, of which I know nothing. The north-western provinces, mapped out and surveyed, would probably, but for the recent revolt, have been subjected to the same process. I ask the House for a moment, to pause and consider what a revolution in property has been going on under the new system in

India, when a sum exceeding two-thirds of £1,000,000 sterling per annum has been obtained by the government as rental of land absolutely taken from individual proprietors. The House will see, as far as I can place before it the salient points of the question, how the system has worked. Honourable members see that the law of adoption has been abolished—a law not affecting kingdoms and principalities merely, but the tenure of land in the whole or greater part of Hindostan." And then, not content with annexing dominions on the pretence that there were no natural successors to the title, not content with annexing territories on no pretence whatever, not content with filling the exchequer by seizing private estates on the ground of fraudulent titles, the Indian government had added a further injury to the people they governed by converting hereditary pensions (on condition of paying which that government had become lord of the sovereignties, as in the case of the nabob of Arcot) into personal annuities. Those, he contended, were among the causes which had produced general discontent throughout India, and had estranged numerous and powerful classes from that authority which, on the whole, they were disposed to regard with deference.

He now approached the third point—that of tampering with the religion of the people of India. "This, I am aware," proceeded Mr. Disraeli, "is one of those subjects which are called difficult and delicate; but, in my opinion, no subject is difficult or delicate when the existence of an empire is at stake, and I shall therefore address myself to this point without any undue reserve. I know that a great prejudice has been raised in this country against missionary enterprise in India; and if I could ascribe to missionary enterprise in that country any share in the production of those vast calamities which we are now considering, nothing should induce me to shrink from avowing my opinion. When, however, we hear of missionary enterprise



in India being the source and origin of these disasters and troubles, I cannot but remember that missionary enterprise is no new feature in India. At a period antecedent to the existence of our empire there were active Christian missions in India. Roman Catholic missions existed, I believe, before the successes achieved by Clive; and although our own missions are of much more modern date, their greatest efforts, their most energetic exertions have been co-existent with general satisfaction and peace among all classes in India, and with a vigorous and successful policy on the part of the government. With these facts before me, then, I must hesitate before I attribute to missionary interference any of those calamities and dangers which we are now considering. The House will pardon me for making these observations. When the country is in danger, we are very happy to seize the first plausible reason which may account for that danger; but the great object of the debate I wish to induce the House to enter upon is, to arrive at sound and safe conclusions as to the causes of the calamitous events which have occurred. I think very great error exists as to the assumed prejudices of Hindoos with regard to what is called missionary enterprise. The fact is that the Hindoos and the Indian population generally, with the exception of the Mussulmans, are educated in a manner which peculiarly disposes them to theological inquiries. There are no people who take such interest in religious discussions as the Hindoos, to the understanding of which their minds are perfectly disciplined. They are a most ancient race; they have a mass of traditions on these subjects; a complete Indian education is, in a great degree, religious; their laws, their tenure of land, depend upon religion; and there is no race in the world better armed at all points for theological discussion than they are. Add to this, that they can always fall back upon an educated priesthood prepared to supply them with arguments and illustrations when they require

such assistance. So far from the Hindoo looking with suspicion upon the missionaries, I am convinced, from what I have read and heard, that the Hindoo is at all times ready to discuss theological questions with the missionary." But, continued Mr. Disraeli, what the Hindoo did regard with suspicion was the union of missionary enterprise with the political power of the government. With that power he associated only one idea, violence. He remembered the missionary enterprise of the Mussulmans, the Koran in one hand, the sabre in the other; and although the Hindoo was perfectly ready to live upon the best terms with the missionary pure and simple, the moment he suspected that the missionary was sanctioned by the government, his most sensitive feelings were outraged. No taxation, however grievous, no injustice, however glaring, acted so dangerously on the Hindoo character as the persuasion that the authority of the crown was exercised to induce him to abandon the faith of his forefathers. Then, had the government of India lent a sanction to that suspicion of the Hindoo? Had the government taken a course which had led the mass of the people to believe that there was ground for such a suspicion? He must answer those questions in the affirmative. It appeared to him that the legislative council of India had, under the new principle, been constantly nibbling at the religious system of the natives. In establishing a national scheme of education for the Hindoos the Sacred Scriptures had suddenly appeared in the schools; "and," remarked Mr. Disraeli, "you cannot persuade the Hindoos that those holy books have appeared there without the concurrence and the secret sanction of the government." Then again, considering the peculiar ideas entertained by Hindoos with regard to women, the establishment of a system of female education in India was, in his opinion, a very unwise step on the part of the authorities. "There are, however," continued Mr. Disraeli, "other on the part of the government"



regard as much more reprehensible, and which, as I shall show, have produced very evil consequences. There are two acts which have passed the legislative council of India within the last few years, and which have amazingly disturbed the religious mind of Hindostan. The first was the law which enacted that no man should be deprived of his inheritance on account of a change of religion. That has occasioned great alarm in India. The House must understand that property is inherited in India by men as trustees for sacred purposes; and if a man does not lose his property who has changed his religion, some of the principal ends and duties of that inheritance cannot be fulfilled. That is a change in the law which has created much alarm and suspicion. But there is also another law which has, if possible, more alarmed the feelings of the Hindoos, and that is the permission to a Hindoo widow to marry a second husband. What could have induced the governor-general of India to pass such a law it is, at this moment, difficult to conceive. If there had been any great feeling on the subject among the Hindoo community, one could have comprehended the reason; but as I am informed, no man or woman among them ever expressed any desire in favour of a change, which is looked upon by all as an outrage on their faith. These two laws have, to my mind, more than any other cause, disquieted the religious feelings of the Hindoos, and prepared their minds for recent lamentable events."

And then the government had committed a further blunder. The temper of India was one of peril; yet it was under those circumstances—it was with the great body of the princes alarmed, and the most powerful classes of the proprietors smarting under grievances—it was even in the midst of usurpation and confiscation, added to religious terror first touching the great mass of the working population, that an event occurred in India to which the gravest consequences might be attached. The govern-

ment annexed Oude. There was no excuse for such appropriation. The principle of adoption was not involved, for the ruler of Oude was a Mohammedan prince. The annexation of Oude did not take place in consequence of the alleged infraction of any treaty by the sovereign of Oude, for that dynasty had always proved itself a faithful ally of the government. And now what had been the result of that falsest of moves? "The moment," said Mr. Disraeli, "the throne of Oude was declared vacant the English troops poured in; the royal treasury was ransacked, and the furniture and jewels of the king and his wives were seized. From that instant the Mohammedan princes were all alienated. For the first time the Mohammedan princes felt that they had an identity of interest with the Hindoo rajahs. From that moment they threw aside the sullen pride of former conquerors who would not condescend to sympathize with the victims of Sattara. They saw that from a system founded upon a violation of Hindoo law they were not to be exempted. The moment that the throne of Oude, occupied by its king, was declared vacant, and English troops were poured into his territory, the Mohammedan princes understood what would be their future fate. You see how the plot thickens. You have the whole of the Indian princes—men of different races and different religions—men between whom there were traditionary feuds and long and enduring prejudices, with all the elements to produce segregation—become united—Hindoos, Maharattas, Mohammedans—secretly feeling a common interest and a common cause. Not only the princes, but the proprietors are against you. Estates as well as musnuds are in danger. You have an active society spread all over India, alarming the ryot, the peasant, respecting his religious faith. Never mind on this head what were your intentions; the question is, what were their thoughts—what their inferences?"

And, continued the critic, the annexation



resulted in more than all these dangers. The Bengal army was largely recruited by the subjects of the king of Oude, soldiers sprung from what in England corresponded with the yeomanry, and enjoying special privileges. To a man the Oude sepoy, finding himself robbed of his country and deprived of his privileges, became mutinous and discontented. He schemed, and plotted, and sent mysterious symbols from village to village, which prepared the native mind to be ready for the overthrow of the British yoke. The mutiny was no more a sudden impulse than the income tax was a sudden impulse. It was the result of careful combinations, vigilant and well organized, on the watch for opportunity. The people of India—their princes deposed, their religion insulted, their soldiers discontented—only waited for an occasion and a pretext; and the occasion was soon furnished, and the pretext soon devised. The new cartridges were sent out, and the mine long and skillfully laid exploded. "I will not go into the question," said Mr. Disraeli contemptuously, "as to whether the cartridges complained of are the same as have always been used, as we have been told is the case. I do not suppose any one will after this discussion suppose that, because the cartridges were believed to be, or were pretended to be believed to be, greased with pig's fat or cow's fat, that was the cause of this insurrection. The decline and fall of empires are not affairs of greased cartridges. Such results are occasioned by adequate causes, and by an accumulation of adequate causes."

He had set forth the reasons which had led to the revolt they now so deeply lamented: it only remained for him to inquire what were the means which the government ought to adopt to meet the emergency. In the present state of affairs, they were all agreed that the employment of force was the first and necessary step. A mere military mutiny might be met by a mere military effort; but with an insurrection, supported by the

favour and sympathy of the great mass of the population, deeper and more stringent measures must be employed. He did not consider the troops about to be sent out to India a sufficient force to cope with the present circumstances. The efforts of the government should be on a much greater scale. There should be an advance from Calcutta through Bengal and an expedition up the Indus. The militia should be called out and embodied; ministers should embrace a larger and more vigorous policy than they had hitherto seemed to intimate or recommend. Every effort should be exerted to save an endangered empire. With a united parliament and a strong government, the difficulties by which they were now menaced could be checked and conquered; and in bringing forward that question, it was his wish to show to Europe and Asia that it was not the object of the British parliament to overthrow a cabinet, but to save an empire.

Mr. Disraeli then concluded his powerful speech, and in his remarks as to justice being tempered with mercy at such a moment, when the heart of England was raging with the most vindictive hate against "the niggers," we see how true and well-balanced a statesman was the late leader of the Opposition, and how superior was his political philosophy to any pandering to the blind and savage passions of the hour. "I have made these observations," he said, "as to the question of force, and I should not have ventured to make any criticism upon the acts of the government upon this subject, if I had been able to agree with them as to the causes of the disturbance. But to my mind, that is not all that we ought to look to. Even if we do vindicate our authority with complete success—revenge the insults we have received, rebuild the power that has been destroyed—it appears to me that we have still a very great and responsible task before us, for it is impossible to drive from our consideration, not merely the future of India, but



also the present condition and feeling of the great mass of the population of that country. We may pour our legions and our fleets up the rivers and through the provinces of India; we may be successful; but to my mind we should add to that success, and doubly strengthen our force; and I am prepared for one to give any support to Her Majesty's government which they may require for that purpose, if at the same time we should say to India that supposes she is aggrieved and outraged, to India perhaps despairing of pardon, 'Although we will assert with the highest hand our authority—although we will not rest until our unquestioned supremacy and predominance are acknowledged from the Punjaub to Cape Comorin—it is not merely as avengers we appear.' I think that the great body of the population of that country ought to know that there is for them a future of hope. I think we ought to temper justice with mercy—justice the most severe with mercy the most indulgent.

"But how are you to do that? What step are you prepared to take? How are you going, let me ask, to govern India when, as I have heard, it has been circulated on the highest authority that the native army of Bengal no longer exists? Has the House well considered the consequences of so easily saying that, as the native army of Bengal has no longer any existence, we should substitute for it English regiments? I do not wish to view the question as one of finance. This country is in a condition at the present moment which will not permit us to dwell upon such considerations; but it is a question not to be lost sight of or blinked. But suppose you had 100,000 or 200,000 Englishmen in India, could you govern India with their aid? You might as well talk of governing India with the House of Commons. Why, the assumption that you are to have an army of Europeans to govern India involves a complete revolution, both in your external policy and in your internal administration in that part of the world. How are you to invade

kingdoms like Pegu—how are you to conquer countries like the Punjaub—merely with men of English constitution? How could they journey through those burning deserts and perform those duties which now are with facility accomplished by the native troops? You could not do it. Look at the condition of our English regiments in India. We have been obliged to guard them and protect them from the influence of the climate up to the moment of those battles which they have been called upon to fight, and which they have invariably won. Well, then, as to your foreign policy? With such a system it would no longer exist. There must be no more annexations, no more conquest. You must entirely change all your relations with the states conterminous with your Indian empire. But look at your internal administration. Can you levy your revenue with English troops? Are English troops to be stationed at every outpost? Are they to escort the money from your treasuries? Are they to perform all those duties which now are with facility performed by those whose habits and organization adapt them to live and work in that country? It is totally impossible that you can ever govern 150,000,000 of men in India by merely European agency. You must meet that difficulty boldly and completely.

"Well, then, the course which I recommend is this:—You ought at once, whether you receive news of success or defeat, to tell the people of India that the relation between them and their real ruler and sovereign, Queen Victoria, shall be drawn nearer. You must act upon the opinion of India on that subject immediately; and you can only act upon the opinion of eastern nations through their imagination. You ought to have a royal commission sent by the queen from this country to India immediately to inquire into the grievances of the various classes of that population. You ought to issue a royal proclamation to the people of India declaring that the Queen of England is not a sovereign who

will countenance the violation of treaties—that the Queen of England is a sovereign who will not disturb the settlement of property—that the Queen of England is a sovereign who will respect their laws, their usages, their customs, and, above all, their religion. Do this, and do this not in a corner, but in a mode and manner which will attract universal attention and excite the general hope of Hindostan, and you will do as much as all your fleets and armies can achieve. But to do this you must act with vigour; you must send to that country competent men—men of high station and ability, such as would entitle them to such office—and who shall appear in Hindostan in the queen's name and with the queen's authority. If that be done, simultaneously with the arrival of your forces, you may depend upon it that your military advance will be facilitated, and, I believe, your ultimate success insured."

This speech gave rise to much criticism, both adverse and favourable. It was said that there was no evidence to prove that the mutiny was a national revolt; no native prince had been concerned in it, and there was no proof as to any conspiracy among the native princes. Between the recent annexations and the mutiny there was no connection whatever. The people of India were not in the slightest degree oppressed; the true reason for the present state of things was that too much faith had been placed in Indian troops, and in troops of one particular kind. So far from the mutiny being a national revolt, the simple truth was that where there were no sepoys there had been no revolt. Instead of the land-

owners being discontented, they had freely offered their aid to the government. In spite, however, of these denials, as the mutiny progressed it became very evident that Mr. Disraeli had accurately fathomed the causes which had led to the rebellion—the native princes allied themselves with the foe, the landowners were our enemies, and the Hindoo fought on desperately, believing his creed and his customs were in danger—and when peace was restored, many of the grievances he brought forward were either redressed or greatly mitigated. Especially was it true that the annexation of Oude had utterly alienated the loyalty of the Bengal sepoy from the government. When Her Majesty was created Empress of India this able speech foreshadowed the policy that was to be pursued.

Parliament was prorogued August 28, 1857. In the speech of the lords commissioners special allusion was made to the mutiny. "Her Majesty commands us to inform you," they said, addressing both Houses, "that the extensive mutinies which have broken out among the native troops of the army of Bengal, followed by serious disturbances in many parts of that presidency, have occasioned to Her Majesty extreme concern; and the barbarities which have been inflicted upon many of Her Majesty's subjects in India, and the sufferings which have been endured, have filled Her Majesty's heart with the deepest grief; while the conduct of many civil and military officers who have been placed in circumstances of much difficulty, and have been exposed to great danger, has excited Her Majesty's warmest admiration."



## CHAPTER XVI.

### CONSERVATIVE REACTION.

THE manner in which we conducted our preliminary operations against the Sepoy was after the usual fashion in which we are given to begin hostilities, when dealing with an enemy we consider an inferior power. We undervalued public peril; we failed to appreciate the strength and ability of the foe; we were slow to avail ourselves of the communications of the moment; we deemed the struggle to be one of short duration, and that the force we then possessed was sufficient to crush a revolt which would speedily be suppressed. Yet the Indian mutiny was a graver resistance than had been anticipated, and taxed all the energies of the authorities, both at home and in the peninsula, to cope with the difficulties which surrounded them, and at one time almost threatened to overwhelm them. Martial law was proclaimed throughout India, our transports in rapid succession landed troops for active service in the mutinous provinces, and distinguished officers displayed on every occasion the accustomed gallantry of their nation. Still, the rebellion plainly proved, as Mr. Disraeli had contended, that the rise was a national, and not merely a military revolt. The siege of Delhi was long and arduous. The Residency at Lucknow was closely beset by the mutineers. Cawnpore was in revolt, and preparing one of the most hideous revenges that the annals of treachery and massacre have ever had to record. City after city fell into the hands of the rebels, and British authority was openly set at defiance. The work of re-conquest was no slight effort; but happily, though little thanks to the government at home, it was successfully carried through. The victories at Sealcote and Bithoor showed

the turn of the tide; successes soon followed up by the battles of Pandoo Nuddee and Nujuffghur; Delhi was stormed and captured, its king taken captive, and the three royal princes of the house of Timour shot down by the hand of the impetuous and redoubtable Hodson, of Hodson's Horse. The besieged Residency at Lucknow had been rescued from the rebels, and Cawnpore had been retaken. Before the close of the year which had seen the rise of the revolt, it was unofficially announced that the "neck of the mutiny was broken."

Whilst these terrible scenes were being acted in the cities and plains of our Indian peninsula, affairs at home had drifted into one of those commercial panics which, according to the statistics of economists, must periodically occur. Failure after failure was announced; firm after firm, hitherto considered solvent, fell into bankruptcy; and banks, one after the other, suspended payment. A reign of commercial terror had been ushered in, caused by the derangement of the American trade supervening upon previous inconveniences created by the mutiny, by the disturbance of the Indian trade, and the wild speculations then being carried on in continental capitals. The first to fall was the Borough Bank of Liverpool, with liabilities estimated at £5,000,000; afterwards the house of Denistoun, largely engaged in the American trade, failed for upwards of £2,000,000; and then followed the collapse of the Scotch banks—the Western Bank of Scotland and the City of Glasgow Bank—bringing down in the crash a host of smaller firms. A worse day than the memorable "Black Friday" had arrived. The Bank of England is the financial

barometer on these terrible occasions. Between October 10 and November 18, the bullion in the bank fell from £10,110,000 to £6,484,000; while the reserve of notes fell during that period from about £4,500,000 to about £1,400,000. For some months previously to this date the foreign drain of bullion was accompanied by an adverse state of the exchanges, and a high rate of discount at the bank. On April 2 the rate of interest was at  $6\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.; on June 18, at 6 per cent.; on July 16, at  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.; on October 8, again at 6 per cent.; on October 12, at 7 per cent.; on October 19, at 8 per cent.; on November 5, at 9 per cent.; and on November 9, at 10 per cent.

So grave was the condition of affairs that government felt bound to repeat the interference of 1847, and suspend the Bank Act. Accordingly, on November 12, a joint letter was addressed by Lord Palmerston and Sir George Cornewall Lewis, the chancellor of the exchequer, to the directors of the Bank of England, by which authority was given to the bank to issue an amount of notes not exceeding £2,000,000 in excess of the proportion allowed by the Act. To understand the nature of this permission it is necessary to be acquainted with the operations of the statute enrolled by Sir Robert Peel. In the course of his long political career Sir Robert had induced the legislature to agree to two important Acts relating to the currency. The first Act was passed in 1819; it restored the currency to its proper metallic basis, and established the convertibility of the bank note. After that Act had been passed, the power of the Bank of England to issue notes was unlimited in point of extent; subject only to the condition of being payable in gold on demand. The power of establishing country banks in England was also unlimited, subject to the privilege which then existed in favour of the Bank of England with reference to partnerships of more than six partners. Such banks, when established, could create any quantity

of bank notes. Under that law any person could found a bank, and issue notes payable to bearer on demand, provided only that those notes were paid in specie upon presentation at the bank which issued them. The same power existed both in Scotland and Ireland.

Such was the state of the law from 1819 to 1844, when Sir Robert Peel introduced his second important Act on the currency. That second Act was to be the complement of the first, and to secure that convertibility of the note which was made legal only by the Act of 1819. It enabled the Bank of England to issue notes on securities to the extent of £14,000,000, together with any further sum which might be required from the lapsed circulation of the English country banks, as to which some detailed provisions were introduced into the Act. It divided the Bank of England into two departments—the issue and the banking departments. And with regard to English country banks, it prohibited any new country bank from issuing notes at all, whilst the country banks existing at the time of the passing of the Act were limited in their issue to the circulation which they then possessed. Similar restrictions were enforced as to the banks in Scotland and Ireland. In establishing this measure the main object which Sir Robert Peel had in view was to provide a security against the excessive issue of paper, and thus to guard against the recurrence of those commercial panics under which the country had at different intervals suffered previously to 1844. He, however, carefully protected himself from pretending that his measure was a panacea against such panics, for he stated that the issue of bank paper was only one of the causes of panic, and commercial disasters might arise from causes which did not lie within the scope of his legislation. During the panic of 1847 Sir Robert Peel thus defended his scheme:—"I say that the bill of 1844 had a triple object. Its first object was that in which I admit it has



failed, viz., to prevent by early and gradual, severe and sudden contraction, and the panic and confusion inseparable from it. But the bill had two other objects of at least equal importance—the one to maintain and guarantee the convertibility of the paper currency into gold, the other to prevent the difficulties which arise at all times from undue speculation being aggravated by the abuse of paper credit in the form of promissory notes. In these two objects my firm belief is that the bill has completely succeeded. My belief is that you have had a guarantee for the maintenance of the principle of convertibility such as you never had before; my belief also is that whatever difficulties you are now suffering from a combination of various causes, those difficulties would have been greatly exaggerated if you had not wisely taken the precaution of checking the unlimited issue of the notes of the Bank of England, of joint-stock banks, and private banks.”

The effect of the issue of the government letter to the directors of the bank at this critical moment was, according to the chancellor of the exchequer, favourable. “It diminished alarm,” he said, “and restored confidence: and it did not in the smallest degree endanger the convertibility of the note, because a favourable turn of the exchange had taken place, and there was at the time no fear of a foreign drain of gold. If that authority had not been given, it is certain that the only measure to which the bank could have resorted for its own protection would have been the immediate and total cessation of discounts.” This stretch of ministerial prerogative, however, called upon the government to demand a bill of indemnity from the legislature, and the Houses were hastily summoned. Parliament met December 3, 1857, and it was understood that its deliberations would be almost exclusively confined to the necessary measures in connection with the Bank Act. The session was opened by Her Majesty in person, who gave in her speech from

the throne the following reasons for the assembling of the Houses:—

“Circumstances have recently arisen connected with the mercantile interests of the country, which have induced me to call parliament together before the usual time. The failure of certain joint stock banks and of some commercial firms produced such an extent of distrust as led me to authorize my ministers to recommend to the directors of the Bank of England the adoption of a course of proceeding which appeared necessary for allaying the prevalent alarm. As that course has involved a departure from the existing law, a bill for indemnifying those who advised and those who adopted it will be submitted for your consideration.” Other subjects were also touched upon. The continuation of the mutiny was deplored, and the gallantry of the troops engaged in its suppression specially remarked upon. Europe was congratulated upon the general peace which reigned. A treaty had been concluded with Persia, and Herat had been evacuated. Then as to the details of future legislation, the attention of the Houses was to be directed to “the laws which regulate the representation of the people in parliament, with a view to consider what amendments may be safely and beneficially made therein;” also the laws relating to real property were to be amended, and several branches of the criminal law consolidated.

Upon the motion of the address Mr. Disraeli (December 3, 1857) exhaustively criticised the different clauses in the royal speech, and commented severely upon the conduct of ministers. He complained of the government not having made itself sooner acquainted with the state of the commercial world, and thus have obviated the extreme course which had been adopted. The House had been asked to grant a bill of indemnity to ministers for having violated an existing law. It was too often the fashion of the House, when a bill of indemnity was the question, to treat it as a very light matter. It was generally sup-

posed that, when such a bill was asked for, it would be conceded as a matter of course, that no opposition would be attempted, and therefore it was a matter which was treated lightly. Yet the fact was that a bill of indemnity was of so grave a character, that it should never be so treated. When accorded, it should be accorded liberally and even generously, but never lightly. Ten years ago, under similar circumstances, a bill of indemnity had been asked for and had been granted. To repeat that sanction they had now assembled. Before complying with such a request, he thought it should be the duty of parliament to require a frank declaration from the government of the circumstances which had induced them to recommend their policy, and of the reasons which they believed sufficient to render the pursuance of that policy necessary. He regretted that the chancellor of the exchequer had stated that he would move for a committee to consider the operation of the Bank Charter Act of 1844. "Now," said Mr. Disraeli, "we shall be doing exactly what we did in 1847. In 1847 the country was panic-struck and half ruined. Parliament was called together, and the country looked to it for the expression of some distinct opinion. A committee was appointed. Ten years have elapsed. The same occurrence takes place. Parliament is again called together; and what is parliament, and what are ministers—the most influential members of parliament—about to do in the difficulty? Again they are going to evade doing that which is the duty of every statesman in this country—to lay down in this House the opinion which they have formed on this subject, and to call on the House to maintain that opinion. Instead of that—and I deeply regret it—we are to have another committee on the Bank Charter Act of 1844; and I suppose that in 1867, after a repetition of the same mischance and the same miseries, the same fruitless and bootless process will be adopted of appointing a committee on that subject in this House."

Three committees, continued Mr. Disraeli, had already been appointed, and yet nothing definite had resulted from their deliberations. A crash came, and lo! another committee was to be appointed. Such a shifting and evasive course should not be pursued. A currency established upon just principles exercised the most general influence that could affect society, and the government should have made up their minds upon the subject. It was not a question of inquiry, but of action. Were ministers going to stand by the Bank Charter Act, or were they not? That was the question the country wished them to answer. If ministers were going to stand by the Act, then he, personally, should hesitate before granting the bill of indemnity, because he did not think they were then justified in departing from the letter of the law. If, on the other hand, ministers were not going to stand by the Bank Act—if they had a policy, if they came forward and said they were prepared to make amendments with respect to that Act, and because they were convinced that such amendments were necessary, they did not hesitate at a moment of emergency to recommend the suspension of the law—then, said Mr. Disraeli, the bill of indemnity should be granted without reserve or reluctance, and the House wait for the proposition the government would make. But if, after all the country had gone through, they were to do exactly that which they were doing before those commercial difficulties occurred, it appeared to him that they should forfeit the confidence and respect of the country. Was the Bank Charter Act of 1844 to be upheld as it then stood? Was it to be amended, or was it to be abandoned? Those were questions ministers should frankly answer. In his opinion nothing was more injurious to the principles of currency than to allow a law to exist which, in moments of emergency, was always suspended, and which, in moments of tranquillity, was always submitted for investigation to parliamentary committees.



Mr. Disraeli then commented upon the other clauses in the royal speech. He was amusingly sarcastic upon the paragraph which stated that "the nations of Europe are in the enjoyment of the blessings of peace, which nothing seems likely to disturb." "Now, several of my hon. friends," he said with humorous gravity, "have put upon this passage an interpretation that may be correct, but which I, taking a more hopeful view, can scarcely suppose to be accurate. They seem to think that something like an expression of regret is conveyed in that paragraph, as if the noble lord (Palmerston) had said, 'I have done all I could to get up a difficulty with the European powers, but I am sorry to say I have not succeeded. We are still at peace; and I am able to bring before you nothing, really nothing, that promises to disturb the universal tranquillity;' as though, in that bold language which renders the noble lord at all times popular, he said, 'I have done my best, but for this once the turbulent and aggressive policy has failed. I cannot help it, but we are in for it; we are at present all at peace.' That, however, is not my interpretation of the words." After the laughter which this remark occasioned had subsided, Mr. Disraeli alluded to the heroic efforts of the troops in India in terms of warm and graceful homage. Their empire in India had been saved by the army—saved, too, by an army which the House must never forget owed nothing to cabinets in London or to councils in Calcutta. "Alone they did it."

What struck him more than anything else throughout these extraordinary transactions, continued the leader of the Opposition, was the total unpreparedness of all who were responsible for the government and the condition of that great empire. He had alluded to the subject before; and how fatally had all his predictions been fulfilled! He had said that the primary and proximate cause of the insurrection had been the annexation of Oude.

That statement was then received with derisive amazement; yet, now, however multifarious the controversies as to the various causes, was there any point on which men were more agreed than that among the chief and certain causes of that widely-spread revolt was the annexation of Oude? He had said that the mutiny was not a military revolt, but a national rise; and had his words not proved true? He blamed the government for their lack of prescience, and their tardy preparations. They had quitted Oude—a recently annexed kingdom, with all the elements of danger in a discontented aristocracy and a disbanded army—totally uncared for. With the news of a mutiny ringing in their ears, yet they had left a place like Delhi in the hands of a sepoy garrison! What had been the consequence of such want of foresight and activity? The whole of their communications had been cut off between Calcutta and the north-western provinces. And why? Because they had not thought of Oude. An insurrection raged in Oude and the provinces connected with it; and the massacre of Cawnpore and the siege of Lucknow had been entirely due to the blunders of the cabinet. The large army they had massed together at Calcutta was unable to advance into the interior owing to the state of Oude—the Oude which, under other circumstances, always furnished the means of transport. He wished to know what the government proposed to do with regard to India—they could not treat it as the Bank Charter, and refer it to a select committee. Did they intend to propose a new form of administration? Were they about to condemn the double government? Was parliament to legislate for India? And was a new form of government to be devised for that country? Those were questions the country expected ministers to answer.

Mr. Disraeli then concluded by remarking upon the proposals announced as to parliamentary reform. He hoped that, when such a measure was introduced, it

would be devised fairly for the public weal, and not to increase the political following of any particular party. There need be no delay in the matter. As they had a reform ministry, a reform minister, and a reform bill, let the House by all means have the bill brought before it at once, so that members might take ample time for the consideration of its clauses.

In a brief reply Lord Palmerston defended the cabinet as to the course it had pursued, both with regard to the suspension of the Bank Act and the supervision of affairs in India, and declined to introduce the subject of reform before Christmas. The address to the throne was then agreed to.

On the following day, when the chancellor of the exchequer had, in a lucid and elaborate speech, carried out his intention of proposing that the House should resolve itself into a committee to consider the Bank Act, Mr. Disraeli again spoke upon the subject. He wished to offer a few suggestions, he said, as to what might be the causes of the prevailing commercial distress and distrust. That distress was general. It was not confined to England; it existed in the United States; and its influence was felt in Germany, in Austria, in Prussia, and in Denmark. The commercial transactions of Europe were carried on, not by millions, but by hundreds of millions; therefore it was a great error to suppose that the management of a limited portion of the currency of England could have occasioned such immense disaster; that disaster was due to the mismanagement of the capital of Europe, and not to the mismanagement of English currency. He must direct their attention to one point. The Bank Act was an Act to regulate the currency of England; its purpose was irreproachable, its object one which every man ought to wish to secure. Yet it was a fact that the Act greatly aggravated commercial distress when it was occasioned by the misapplication, not of English currency, but of the general capital of the world. That was a

point which had never been considered, and yet it was one which could be fully established. Owing to the Bank Act—intended merely as a currency Act, and to have a limited application—managers of the currency of England had been forced to treat in an identical manner, and by the same means, two circumstances totally opposite in their character, and both exercising an injurious influence on English commerce and capital—a foreign drain and a domestic drain. Yet, if there was anything which could be established by argument and an appeal to fact, it was that the two sets of circumstances should be treated in an exactly contrary manner, and be encountered by means exactly opposite. They should, therefore, gravely consider the question without fear of being accused of wishing to tamper with the standard of value, or to inundate the country with paper money. They must not conceal from themselves that they had a law intended only to act on English currency—excellent so far as the principle it asserted was concerned—yet whenever commercial distress occurred, was found to be oppressive, and in seasons of great emergency had to be suspended. The question, therefore, naturally arose, what was the effect of allowing the currency of the country to be regulated by an Act which they were in a continual state of being prepared to suspend? Were they to sanction a chronic state of suspension? Were they to uphold a law of such a character that those who were acting under it knew, that when an emergency arose, it would not be enforced?

It was said that the Bank Act was a considerable check upon over-speculation and an inflated currency, which in times of prosperity abounded. But eminent financial authorities had contradicted that assertion. It had been held by great economists that the depreciation of a bank note convertible at par was a simple impossibility, that it was quite out of the power of any bank to issue beyond the requirements of the country, and that no issue of bank notes



of asylum to protect such a state of things? Is hospitality due to assassins? Shall English legislation serve to favour their designs and their manœuvres? And can it continue to protect persons who place themselves by flagrant acts without the pale of the common laws? . . . Full of confidence in the exalted reason of the English cabinet, we abstain from all indication as regards the measures which it may be suitable to take. We rely on them for a careful appreciation of the decision which they shall judge most proper, and we congratulate ourselves in the firm persuasion that we shall not have appealed in vain to their conscience and their loyalty."

The more France reflected upon the conduct of England, the hotter and more vindictive became the national passion. Addresses of congratulation poured in upon the emperor from his army; and in the wording of many of them there were the most offensive allusions to our country, as the asylum of all that was base and monstrous. In the address of the 5th Lancers it was said, "The army is afflicted that powerful friends, whose brave armies so lately fought by our side, should, under the name of hospitality, protect conspirators and assassins surpassing those who have gone before them in all that is odious." In the address of the 59th Regiment the colonel cried, "In our manly hearts indignation against the perverse, succeeding to our gratitude to God, moves us to demand an account from the land of impurity which contains the haunts of the monsters who are sheltered by its laws. Give us the order, sire, and we will pursue them even to their strongholds!" The fiery colonel of the Rouen division exclaimed, "Let the miserable assassins, the subordinate agents of such crimes, receive the chastisement due to their abominable attempts; but let also the infamous haunt in which machinations so infernal are planned be destroyed for ever!" Several of these addresses were inserted in the *Moniteur*, the official organ of the French government, and therefore, when they thus

appeared, were regarded by England as insults specially sanctioned by the emperor. It afterwards appeared that these passionate expressions had been inserted in the newspaper by inadvertence. Lord Palmerston, in the House of Commons, stated that Count Walewski had ordered the Duke de Persigny to say, "that although the practice was a universal practice to publish addresses of the French army, if in two or three addresses out of many hundreds some passages were allowed to be printed to which objections had been taken in England, that circumstance must have arisen from the inadvertence of those who had the charge of publishing those addresses, and that he was ordered on the part of the emperor to state that he regretted such publication." Still, in spite of this apology, the feeling between England and France was for the moment bitterer than it had been since Waterloo.

According to our common law, it is a misdemeanour for a number of British subjects to combine and conspire together to excite rebellion among the inhabitants of a friendly state; and as an instance of parliamentary assent to the principle of this doctrine, Lord Palmerston (February 8, 1858) introduced his Conspiracy to Murder Bill. Circumstances arose, he said, from time to time, which pointed to the necessity or expediency of revising particular laws. An event of that nature had recently happened. A conspiracy had been formed, partly in this country, to commit an atrocious crime. He had no intention of introducing a bill to remove aliens on mere suspicion; but having strong reason to believe that a conspiracy to murder had been partially concocted here, he was anxious to consider the state of the law upon the subject. Conspiracy to murder was a misdemeanour, and punishable by fine and imprisonment. In Ireland it was treated as a capital offence. He therefore proposed to make conspiracy to murder a felony, punishable with penal servitude, and to apply it to all persons with respect

to conspiracies to murder, wherever intended. "I cannot but think," he said, in conclusion, "that the provisions of the bill will have a decisive effect in deterring those who may wish to make this country a place where they may hatch and concoct crimes of a disgraceful character; and, at all events, they will learn that they cannot do so without liability to punishment." Mr. Kinglake proposed, as an amendment, that it was inexpedient to legislate in compliance with the demand made in Count Walewski's despatch, until the correspondence between the two governments subsequent to that despatch had been produced.

A long debate ensued, in which Mr. Disraeli took part. From the remarks of the leader of the Opposition, we see how high was his estimate of the late emperor, and how important he considered the necessity of maintaining the alliance between England and France. "I would remind the House," he began (February 9, 1858), "that it is not unusual in the history of this country, and in the practice of parliament when some desperate crime has been committed, or when there has been an unusual repetition of some crime known to the law, that parliament should take those circumstances into consideration, and, upon the circumstance of the moment, proceed to legislate. Why, throughout the debate of this night there have been frequent allusions to the difference of the law on this very subject in Ireland and in England. How came that difference to be established? It was owing to the peculiar circumstances of Ireland. It was the prevalence of conspiracies to murder in Ireland that led the attention of parliament to the subject; and without offering at this moment any opinion upon the expediency of the course which was adopted, still it is a fact, that special circumstances of that country induced parliament to legislate upon that subject. Well, sir, there have been other cases which, I am sure, will be fresh in the memory of all who are present, in which legislation has been induced by special circumstances of this

character. There is a case of great notoriety, which is part of the history of this country, and which intimately interests honourable members of this House, for honourable members of this House were concerned in it. There is a case where a foreigner stabbed, and attempted to assassinate, a minister of state at the council table. I allude to the case of Guiscard and Mr. Harley. Guiscard, a French agent, stabbed Mr. Harley, who at the time, as chancellor of the exchequer, was sitting at the Cockpit, at a meeting of the privy council. That was an attempt at assassination, which, though it failed, excited the greatest excitement in the country. Guiscard was a Frenchman. He was denounced as a Popish spy. The attempt was taken as evidence of a Popish plot, and great agitation prevailed in the public mind. What was the conduct of parliament under the circumstances? Were they silent? Did they take no steps to express their opinion or endeavour to prevent the repetition of such attempts by legislation? On the contrary, the House of Commons met and addressed the throne. The ministers introduced, and the House passed unanimously, a bill which rendered the crime of attempting to assassinate a privy councillor a felony."

With that precedent before them, continued Mr. Disraeli, should they regard the person of one of their most powerful and faithful allies as a matter of less interest than when the person of an English minister was in question? All the circumstances connected with the attack upon the Emperor of the French must arouse the sympathy and command the good feeling of the country and of parliament. During the last five years they had found in the ruler of France a tried ally—one who had proved in the most trying fortunes that England could depend upon his constancy. The attempt to assassinate the emperor had been organized and matured in this country, and it behoved parliament fully to sympathize with the position of that monarch, and remove all obstacles which embarrassed his



rule. He frankly admitted that the despatch of Count Walewski was not written with that tact, good temper, and good sense which generally characterized the French minister's lucubrations, and that the observations of the French colonels were impertinent. But apologies had been tendered for the publicity afforded to such observations, and they should be accepted with a good grace. Besides, did the House not remember when cabinet ministers had denounced the Emperor of the French as a tyrant, a usurper, a perjurer, and had asked the people of England what protection they could have for their wives and daughters with such neighbours as the French, and such a ruler as the French emperor? Were the statesmen of England less offensive to France upon that occasion than the French colonels had now been to England? If the French emperor and the French nation could endure with impunity such insults from English cabinet ministers, he really thought the people of England could afford to pocket the impertinence of the French colonels.

It was his intention, proceeded Mr. Disraeli, to support the bill, because he wished to maintain the alliance between England and France, which he believed to be the key and corner-stone of modern civilization; still, he far from approved of the manner in which the government had acted. He thought they had alarmed England without pleasing France; but he would not vote against the bill, because he was desirous of showing the ruler of France, at such a moment, that parliament genuinely and generously sympathized with the difficulties of the imperial position. He would reserve to himself, on the second reading of the bill, the power of considering the principle upon which it was founded. "I make a full and fair admission," he concluded, "that a proposition less satisfactory never appears to me to have been offered to the consideration of this house of parliament. When the French nation, through their ministers and rulers, had placed before us

a statement of their fancied grievances, an English minister should, in some immortal state paper breathing the fire and logical eloquence of a Canning, have answered that despatch. He should have placed upon the table a manifesto of our rights and privileges, and at the same time, have combined with it a glowing expression of sympathy with a powerful and faithful ally. This is what I expected; and the minister who missed that opportunity, missed, as I think, a great occasion. If we had had the despatch of Count Walewski placed on the table, and at the same time the answer of the British minister worthy of the opportunity, in my opinion Her Majesty's government would have been placed in a position of no difficulty, and the feelings between the two nations would have been maintained in that amicable condition which we all so much desire. Such a despatch would have been the key-note of the country. The minister might have come down under those circumstances and have given to the French emperor what he wanted, what he naturally, reasonably, and properly desired. . . . What the emperor really required, I apprehend, was a plain demonstration on the part of this country, which would have dissipated those apprehensions which have unfortunately proved so considerable in France; but I cannot believe that the bill which the noble lord has proposed will at all tend to that most desirable consummation. So far as I am concerned, I consider it the most unfortunate part of the position in which we are placed that this opportunity has been so mismanaged by Her Majesty's ministers as to have alarmed England without pleasing France. Still, I cannot but think that we ought not to take a course which might lead to prolonged and mischievous misconceptions, because we disapprove of the clumsy and feeble manner in which the government has attempted to deal with this difficulty. We must not seize this opportunity because we wish to inflict a check upon the government, nor do that which might be miscon-

strued into an insult to that prince who, I think, deserves well of this country; and therefore it is my intention to vote for the bringing in of this bill, though I am not prepared, as at present advised, to take any further part in its defence."

Thanks to this negative sort of support from the leader of the Opposition, Mr. Kinglake withdrew his amendment, and permission was accorded to Lord Palmerston to bring in his bill.

During the interval, however, between the first and second reading of this measure, the feeling of the country against French interference had deepened into a sullen and mutinous spirit. It was said that the bill was a servile compliance with French demands, and should not be passed under the present circumstances. The prime minister was accused of being the *préfet* of the emperor, and of meanly yielding the independent authority he ought to exercise as an English minister. Then also, it was sternly asked, why had no answer been returned to the despatch of Count Walewski? The mood of the nation was clearly interpreted by the House of Commons when the second reading of the Conspiracy Bill came on. No sooner had Lord Palmerston sat down, after briefly alluding to his measure, than Mr. Milner Gibson, amid loud and repeated cheers, moved as an amendment, "That this House cannot but regret that Her Majesty's government, previously to inviting the House to amend the law of conspiracy at the present time, have not felt it to be their duty to reply to the important despatch received from the French government, dated Paris, January 20, 1858, which has been laid before parliament." The opportunity was not lost upon the generalship of Mr. Disraeli. It was one of those occasions when genius sees the course that is precisely to be pursued, adroitly presses its advantage home, and taking the tide at the flood, is borne on to victory. The leader of the Opposition saw that there was no inconsistency in voting for the introduction of the bill,

and afterwards supporting the amendment, for the political situation had changed. It was not a question now between England and France, but between the House of Commons and the prime minister. In his first speech he had stated how advisable it would have been to have had the answer to the despatch laid before the House; and yet nearly a fortnight had elapsed, and still no reply had been forwarded to Paris.

"Ten days ago," Mr. Disraeli said (February 19, 1858), "many hon. gentlemen acceded to the proposal of the government in the most guarded manner, because they reserved to themselves the right on a future occasion of expressing their opinions on the conduct of the government, and the injurious influence which it has exercised upon the character of England and the general course of events; but because they did then accede to the introduction of the bill, does that stop them from opposing its further progress through this House? Why, if it was ten days ago a question between the parliament of England and the government and the people of France, that is not the position in which it stands upon the present occasion; and in coming to a vote to-night we have the great advantage that on the previous occasion, by the manner in which the Commons of England agreed to the introduction of the bill, we proved our sincere sympathy with the French nation, and we displayed a decorous respect for the Emperor of the French. That very circumstance, I think, allows us now to offer our opinions, because now they cannot be misinterpreted, upon the conduct of the British minister."

It was now, he argued, a question between parliament and the prime minister. If it was the fault of the government that ten days ago the despatch of Count Walewski was not answered, what excuse could now be made that it had not been replied to? Parliament had generously supported the first reading of the bill, with a clear intimation of the view with which it regarded the *laches* of the government in not replying



to that missive of the minister of France, and yet even now no answer had been sent! No valid reason, no satisfactory excuse, had been advanced for the conduct of the government. The despatch of Count Walewski had been published in the *Moniteur*, it had appeared in every accredited organ in Europe, it was the talk of all diplomacy, and still no reply had been vouchsafed to so important a document. It was perfectly inexplicable to him, said Mr. Disraeli, how the government could be guilty of the indiscretion of laying that unanswered despatch upon the table of the House of Commons, and of making it the very basis of the legislation which they now proposed. The question they had to decide to-night was solely confined to the responsibility which the government had incurred to those who represented the people of England in that House. The whole circumstance of that despatch was cloaked in mystery, and no explanation had been afforded why it had not been answered. The government had behaved in a perplexed, a timid, a confused and unsatisfactory manner. If ministers had acted with promptitude and firmness—with a spirit ready to assert the dignity of the country, but at the same time calculated to conciliate the feelings of a faithful ally—no misconception would have occurred. The issue before them had been narrowed to a very small limit. It was a question between parliament and the servants of the crown. Had ministers, or had they not, done their duty?

On a division, the House of Commons decided that the servants of the crown had not done their duty, and Lord Palmerston found himself in a minority—Ayes, 215; Noes, 234. The majority was a mixed one; it was composed of 146 Conservatives, eighty-four Liberals, and four Peelites—Gladstone, Graham, Cardwell, and Sidney Herbert.

The defeat of the government took the country by surprise. There had been nothing in the events which had preceded

the introduction of this bill to plainly indicate that Lord Palmerston had been losing ground. In the recent elections he was the hero of the hour, the patriotic minister of England, and his policy had been stamped with the warm approval of the nation. On the conclusion of the mutiny the war with China had been resumed, and Canton had been taken. The vote of thanks to the civil and military officers of India, in spite of the efforts of the Opposition to exclude the name of Lord Canning, had been passed. The Oaths Bill, introduced by Lord John Russell, to effect the admission of the Jews into parliament, and which empowered either house of parliament, by resolution, to omit the words, "upon the true faith of a Christian," from the oath of abjuration, had encountered no hostility. The measure to abolish the double government in India had met with approval. Reform, anxiously wanted, was on the eve of being introduced. Everything seemed to lead to the supposition that the Palmerston cabinet was about to hold a long lease of power. The government fell because the prime minister had wounded the country where it was the most likely to feel wounded, and because he declined to appeal for a further continuance in office. Had Lord Palmerston appealed to the House of Commons for a vote of confidence, the Opposition would in all probability have been defeated, and another measure more satisfactory to the country than the Conspiracy to Murder Bill been introduced. The chief of the cabinet, however, preferred to follow the constitutional course, and tendered his resignation. Lord Derby was sent for by Her Majesty, and the following were the most important members of the new Conservative administration:—

First Lord of the Treasury, .	Earl of Derby.
Lord Chancellor, . . . .	Lord Chelmsford.
Lord President of the Council,	Marquis of Salisbury.
Lord Privy Seal, . . . .	Earl of Hardwicke.
Chancellor of the Exchequer,	Mr. Disraeli.
Home Secretary, . . . .	Mr. Walpole.

Foreign Secretary, . . .	Earl of Malmesbury.
Colonial Secretary, . . .	Lord Stanley.
War Secretary, . . . . .	Colonel Peel.
Indian Board of Control, .	Lord Ellenborough.
President of Board of Trade,	Mr. Henley.
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, . . . . .	Duke of Montrose.
Postmaster-General, . . .	
First Lord of the Admiralty,	Sir J. Pakington.
Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland,	The Earl of Eglinton.
Chief Secretary for Ireland,	Lord Naas.
Woods and Forests, . . .	Lord J. Manners.

During the remainder of the session, several measures of great importance not only became law, but the monotony of legislation was frequently enlivened by contests between those who had been expelled from, and those who had recently acceded to office. One of the first duties of the new cabinet was to repair the omission of its predecessor, and return an answer to the despatch of Count Walewski. "Your lordship will remark to Count Walewski," wrote Lord Malmesbury to Lord Cowley, our ambassador at Paris, "that his Excellency, in stating that the attempt which has just providentially failed, like others which have preceded, was devised in England; in speaking with reference to the *adeptes de la démagogie* established in England, of 'assassination elevated to doctrine, preached openly, practised in repeated attempts;' and in asking 'whether the right of asylum should protect such a state of things or contribute to favour their designs and their plans,' has not unnaturally been understood to imply imputations, not only that the offences enumerated are not recognized as such by the English law, and may be committed with impunity, but that the spirit of English legislation is such as designedly to shelter and screen the offender from punishment. Her Majesty's government are persuaded that had Count Walewski known, when his Excellency held with your lordship the conversation to which I have adverted above, that such construction was put upon certain portions of his despatch of January 20, he would have had no difficulty in adding to the assurance then

given—the assurance that nothing could have been further from his intention than to convey an imputation injurious alike to the morality and the honour of the British nation." A few days after the transmission of this despatch, a reply was received which enabled Mr. Disraeli to announce to the House of Commons (March 12, 1858), that the unfortunate misunderstanding which had recently existed between the two countries had now entirely terminated in a manner alike friendly and honourable, and which would be as satisfactory to the feelings as it was conducive to the interests of the two countries.

The overthrow of the late cabinet rendered it necessary for the Conservative government to deal with the India bill which Lord Palmerston had introduced, but owing to party defeat, had been prevented from carrying through. On the conclusion of the severe struggles of the mutiny, it became very evident that the end of "John Company" was approaching. The evils consequent upon the double government then in fashion were so glaring, that it was impossible, in the face of the past difficulties that had occurred, to defend the system. The crown had the power of nominating the governor-general, and the company had the power of recalling him. The company gave general directions for the government of India; but the parliamentary department, known as the board of control, had the right to review and revise those directions. Thus on every grave occasion there was a division of power and a conflict of authority. In introducing his bill for the transfer of the authority of the company to the crown, Lord Palmerston had said that he was not acting in a spirit of hostility to the East India Company, nor upon the ground of any delinquency on the part of the company; but that it was solely owing to the inconvenience, and the injurious character of the existing arrangements, he desired to substitute the direct government of the crown. He showed that there was a



conflict of responsibility; he pictured momentous despatches oscillating in cabs between Cannon Row and Leadenhall Street, and pointed out that the results were generally a compromise unsatisfactory both to the India house and the board of control. It now fell to the lot of Mr. Disraeli, as leader of the House of Commons, to carry out this policy. He rose up (March 26, 1858) to introduce the India Bill of the new government—called India Bill No. 2, so as to distinguish it from the bill previously brought in by Lord Palmerston. Like its predecessor, it never went beyond the first reading.

"I could willingly have wished," he said, "that it had not fallen to my lot to perform a duty to-night which I believe to be clearly for the public advantage; but which, I think, no man not totally devoid of sensibility can perform without emotion. This corporation has fallen, sir, from no inefficiency on the part of its chief managers. It has certainly not fallen from any want of talent, spirit, and devotion in its admirable public servants. It has fallen before the inevitable consequences of time, of change, and of progress. The circumstances under which it was created and cherished have gradually changed and passed away; and though its fall at last has appeared to be sudden, those who have given attention to its position could hardly have doubted, from the year 1853, that the time had almost arrived, and must arrive without any great delay, when parliament would have to consider what should be the most fitting substitute for an institution which in its day has done great service to this country, and which will always be remembered with pride and with respect. The East India Company has fallen very much like that great Italian republic which I have always thought it rivalled and resembled. It has fallen in possession of a gallant army, a powerful fleet, and a considerable territory. It has fallen with all the semblance of authority, and it has met its end in the august fulfilment of its duties.

But when Venice fell under similar circumstances, it was discovered that, whatever was its outward show, it rested on a foundation which had been sapped and was hollow for a long period of time. Like Venice, however, the East India Company has left a legacy of glory to mankind; and in treating to-night of a form of government which in our opinion ought to be substituted for that which has become extinct, I hope the House will allow me to express my own feelings, and to speak of the company with that respect which I think every right-minded Englishman will always extend to its memory."

Into the details of this measure we need but briefly enter, since the bill did not become law, but was withdrawn in favour of India Bill, No. 3, based upon the resolutions brought forward by Lord John Russell. Whilst desirous of abolishing the court of directors, and transferring their powers to the crown, Mr. Disraeli sought to secure the support of the democratic section of the community by making certain members of the council elective, and vesting the choice of them in large parliamentary constituencies. His scheme was as follows:—At the head of affairs there was to be a secretary of state for India, who was to be president of the council of India, and to have the power of appointing a vice-president. The council for India was to consist of eighteen persons, half to be nominated by the crown, half to be elected. Each of the Presidencies was to furnish one member of the council—a civil servant, who had served for at least ten years, five of which were to have been passed as resident or political agent at the court of some native prince. The remaining members were to represent the military service of the queen in India and the armies of the three Presidencies. The first council was to be appointed by parliament, but the second and future members by royal warrant. The other portion of the proposed council was to be elective, the qualification for four of the members being service for



at least ten years in the army, navy, or civil service of India, or residence there for fifteen years, engaged in agriculture, in commerce, or as a planter or manufacturer. The constituency by which they were to be chosen would consist of about 5000 persons, a vote being given to every one who had borne the queen's commission in India for ten years or who had been in the civil service for that time, to every registered proprietor of £2000 stock in Indian railways, and to every *bonâ fide* holder of £1000 stock. The remaining five members were to be elected by London, Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, and Belfast, respectively.

Shortly after its introduction the bill encountered strong opposition, both in parliament and throughout the country. Mr. Roebuck called it a sham from beginning to end, and said the electoral principle was introduced only to give colour to the despotic character of the bill. Mr. Bright warned the government to reconsider the measure, and stigmatized the provisions relating to popular election as clap-trap. The more the measure was examined, the more was it disliked; especial disapprobation being directed against the propositions to make certain members of the council elective, and to vest the choice of them in large parliamentary constituencies. When the bill came on for the second reading, had the Opposition been united it would have gone hard with the government; but instead of attacking the bill, and pressing the matter to a division, Lord John Russell rose and proposed to proceed by resolution. In substance, the resolutions he proposed provided for the transfer of the governing powers in India, executed by the company, to the crown, acting through one of the principal secretaries of state; those functions of government to be exercised by a minister of the crown, either alone or with the approbation of the committee for the affairs of India; a council of not less than twelve nor more than fifteen members was to

be appointed; and in order to secure knowledge and experience in the council, each member was to be required to have served for a term of years to be fixed by statute; the council was to be partly nominated and partly elected.

Upon these resolutions the India Bill, No. 3, was framed. It led to much discussion in the House of Commons; but both parties appeared to be united as to the substantial merits of the measure, and it was sent up to the Lords in the first week of July. It passed rapidly through the Upper House, and was then sent down to the Commons with a few trifling alterations. The most important of these was the amendment of the peers advising that the scientific branches of the Indian army should be thrown open to public competition. This amendment was supported by Mr. Disraeli (July 30, 1858). He was, he said, a firm, though not an extravagant or headstrong supporter of the competitive principle for public appointments; but as yet it had worked well, and he therefore supported the amendment. "There has rarely," he said, "been a subject of legislation more important than the one with which we have dealt in this session respecting the home government in India. Let the House recollect that for upwards of seventy years this question has been at intervals the subject of parliamentary discussion; that it has given rise to the greatest acerbities of feeling, and prolonged acrimony of political sentiments; that it has convulsed cabinets, has dissolved parliaments, and that finally it has been recognized by the country as one of those knots that no ingenuity and no impartiality could ever untie. I claim no merit for the government in having brought this matter to some satisfactory conclusion. I claim some merit for parliament and some for the House of Commons; but I claim the chief merit for the more enlightened spirit of the times in which we live, for the diffused education of the country where we have the happiness to be fellow-citizens, and the



rising sense of the value which we all attribute to intellectual acquirements, and our recognition of them as a proper qualification for admission to civil office. This spirit has assisted us in bringing this bill to its present state. It is, I think, only surprising that there have not been greater differences of opinion between the two Houses, and among ourselves in this House; but what I would impress on the House is this—the great desirability there is that this legislation should be brought to a conclusion without leaving on any side and in any quarter, in any state or condition of the country, any feeling of irritation or jealousy. It is impossible that the middle classes, whose claims have been urged so freely, fairly, and constantly in this House and in other places—it is impossible that the great body of the community can for a moment feel that their claims have not been regarded. We have effected this change if the House to-night consents to this final step; and so far as the patronage of the great empire of India—won, I freely admit, by the energies of the middle classes—is concerned, the great bulk will be obtained and enjoyed by those middle classes, not only with the certainty which they enjoyed in old days, but with far more honour and by a process infinitely more beneficial. Let us, by acceding to this suggestion of the Lords, conclude our labours with this conviction that we have, after all our pains, established on the whole a home government for India adapted to the circumstances with which it will have to deal, and have at the same time effected this object without creating jealousy, suspicion, or dissatisfaction in any portion of the community over which Her Majesty reigns.” There was some little discussion in both Houses upon the amendments to the bill; but the Lords having agreed to the proposals of Lord Derby, and the Lower House having acquiesced in the retention of the amendments which the peers insisted upon, the bill received on the last day of the session the assent of the crown.

Whilst this bill was passing through committee India became the subject of an important debate, which at first appeared fraught with very dangerous consequences to the new government. On the fall of Lucknow, which had been retaken by the rebels, and had been closely besieged by Sir Colin Campbell, the governor-general issued the following proclamation to the chiefs and inhabitants of Oude (March 3, 1858):—“The army of his Excellency the commander-in-chief is in possession of Lucknow, and the city lies at the mercy of the British government, whose authority it has for nine months rebelliously defied and resisted. The resistance begun by a mutinous soldiery has found support from the inhabitants of the city and of the province of Oude at large. Many who owed their prosperity to the British government, as well as those who believed themselves aggrieved by it, have joined in this bad cause, and ranged themselves with the enemies of the state. The first care of the governor-general will be to reward those who have been steadfast in their allegiance at a time when the authority of the government was partially overborne, and who have proved this by the support and assistance which they have given to British officers.” The proclamation then specified the names of six talookdars or landowners of Oude, including two rajahs, and declared that they “are henceforward the sole hereditary proprietors of the lands which they held when Oude came under British rule, subject only to such moderate assessment as may be imposed upon them; and that those loyal men will be further rewarded in such manner and to such extent as, upon consideration of their merits and their position, the governor-general shall determine. A proportionate measure of reward and honour, according to their deserts, will be conferred upon others in whose favour like claims may be established to the satisfaction of the government.”

In addition, the governor-general fur-

ther proclaimed to the people of Oude, that, with the above-mentioned exceptions, the proprietary right in the soil of the province was confiscated to the British government, which would dispose of that right in such manner as might seem fitting. "To those talookdars, chiefs, and landholders, with their followers, who shall make immediate submission to the chief commissioner of Oude, surrendering their arms and obeying his orders, the right hon. the governor-general promises that their lives and honour shall be safe, provided that their hands are unstained by English blood murderously shed. But as regards any further indulgence which may be extended to them, and the conditions in which they may hereafter be placed, they must throw themselves upon the justice and mercy of the British government. . . . As participation in the murder of Englishmen and Englishwomen will exclude those who are guilty of it from all mercy, so will those who have protected English lives be specially entitled to consideration and leniency." Upon this proclamation being shown to Sir James Outram, the chief commissioner of Oude, he considered the expressions it contained so harsh and severe that he remonstrated at the impolicy of its publication. He pleaded for a modification of the provisions it contained, and begged that the sweeping clauses as to confiscation might be altered. His request was to a certain extent granted, and the following words were added to the proclamation, after the paragraph which ended with "justice and mercy of the British government":—"To those among them who shall promptly come forward and give to the chief commissioner their support in the restoration of peace and order, this indulgence will be large, and the governor-general will be ready to view liberally the claims which they may thus acquire to a restitution of their former rights."

Upon the Conservative government coming into power the opinion of Sir James

Outram was warmly supported by Lord Ellenborough, the president of the board of control. Without any consultation with his colleagues, and of his own mere motion, Lord Ellenborough, shortly after his installation in office, forwarded a despatch (April 19, 1858) to the governor-general of India, condemning in strong terms the Oude proclamation. "We cannot but express to you," he said, "our apprehension that this decree, pronouncing the disinherison of a people, will throw difficulties almost insurmountable in the way of the re-establishment of peace. We are under the impression that the war in Oude has derived much of its popular character from the rigorous manner in which, without regard to what the chief landowners had become accustomed to consider their rights, the summary settlement had in a large portion of the province been carried out by your officers. . . . Other conquerors, when they have succeeded in overcoming resistance, have excepted a few persons as still deserving of punishment, but have, with a generous policy, extended their clemency to the great body of the people. You have acted upon a different principle: you have reserved a few as deserving of special favour, and you have struck, with what they feel as the severest of punishments, the mass of the inhabitants of the country. We cannot but think that the precedents from which you have departed, will appear to have been conceived in a spirit of wisdom superior to that which appears in the precedent you have made. We desire that you will mitigate, in practice, the stringent severity of the decree of confiscation you have issued against the landowners of Oude. We desire to see British authority in India rest upon the willing obedience of a contented people. There cannot be contentment where there is general confiscation. Government cannot long be maintained by any force in a country where the whole is rendered hostile by a sense of wrong; and if it were possible so to maintain it, it would not be a summation to be desired."



The appearance of this despatch caused considerable excitement, and led to a debate in both Houses which lasted several nights. By the Opposition it was strongly censured as an attack upon an absent man, who was engaged in duties of great responsibility, and under circumstances of no ordinary peril. It was considered that the difficulties of the situation of the governor-general would be greatly increased by the publication of the despatch at such a moment. On the other hand, the Conservatives throughout the mutiny had not been influenced by the savage passions which advocated a sweeping policy of revenge, but had consistently recommended that in dealing with the rebellion justice should be tempered with mercy. It was the Liberal party who were hotly in favour of vindictive measures, confiscation, and wholesale capital punishment. The only fault the cabinet found with the despatch of Lord Ellenborough was, that it had been issued without any consultation with ministers. In both Houses resolutions were brought forward equivalent to a vote of censure. In the House of Commons Mr. Cardwell moved "That this House, while it abstains from expressing any opinion upon the policy of any proclamation which may have been issued by the governor-general of India in relation to Oude, has seen with regret and serious apprehension that Her Majesty's government have addressed to the governor-general, through the secret committee of the court of directors, and have published a despatch condemning in strong terms the conduct of the governor-general, and are of opinion that such a course on the part of the government must tend, in the present circumstances of India, to produce most prejudicial effects by weakening the authority of the governor-general, and by encouraging to further resistance those who are still in arms against us." Strange to say, a few evenings later, this despatch in favour of mercy was opposed in the Upper House, in a similar resolution to that

moved by Mr. Cardwell, by Lord Shaftesbury, whose whole career has been spent laboriously and honourably in the sacred work of mercy.

The course that Lord Ellenborough pursued when arraigned before his peers was most loyal and frank. He defended in the most emphatic manner the step he had taken; he had heard no condemnation of the tenor of the despatch he had written; no one had ventured to defend the principle of confiscation; the only question raised had been as to the propriety of publishing the document. For that act he was entirely responsible. The Oude proclamation was directly opposed in principle to the policy of the government, and deserved, in his opinion, the fullest condemnation. The despatch which censured it would be regarded in India as a message of peace, and would tend to pacify those who now lived in dread of English retribution. In England it was a question of party, but in India it would be understood as a conflict between the principles of confiscation and those of clemency. He admitted that he was on the side of clemency. Yet for his conduct he was alone responsible, and his colleagues should not be visited with any blame in the matter. In order, therefore, not to embarrass the action of the government he had tendered his resignation, which had been accepted. Lord Derby warmly praised the conduct of Lord Ellenborough; he defended the principle of the despatch, but regretted its premature publication; it was published without his knowledge, and he did not therefore hold himself responsible for the act. After a full debate upon the subject the verdict of the peers was against the resolution proposed by the Earl of Shaftesbury.

In the Commons the discussion was more lengthened and venomous. It lasted over four nights, and was memorable for the support afforded the government by some of the most prominent members of the Radical party, notably Sir James Graham



Mr. Roebuck, and Mr. Bright. As the debate proceeded, it was evident that the motion of Mr. Cardwell was viewed by members with less and less favour. The Opposition had made a false move, and soon discovered their mistake. Member after member begged Mr. Cardwell to withdraw his motion, and it soon became plain that the phalanx against the government was breaking up. Towards the close of the debate Mr. Disraeli addressed a few words to the House. The motion, he said, was a vote of censure, and he looked without apprehension to the result, and was ready to encounter the consequences of a division. With the exception of Lord Ellenborough's despatch, intended only for the eye of Lord Canning, the government had given the governor-general their cordial support. He considered the despatch justifiable, as he had always been in favour of clemency, and he was in hope that it had been addressed to a willing agent. It was most desirable that the ministers and the governor-general should act together cordially and sincerely. "We never anticipated," said Mr. Disraeli, "the publication of the despatch which has produced all this discussion. But permit me to say, that if the relations between Her Majesty's government and the governor-general of India should be cordial, they should also be sincere; and if it is supposed for a moment that I, or those with whom I act, are prepared in any way to retract the opinions which we have expressed with regard to the policy of confiscation, which Lord Canning under evil influences unhappily adopted, but which I hope and have some reason to believe he has by this time relinquished, the House will indeed have misinterpreted what I have said, and the country will indeed be deceived as to the policy which we intend to pursue. I trust that Lord Canning will be influenced by those sentiments and that policy which distinguished his career at the commencement of these sad disturbances and disasters." He then ended by reaffirming his former statements as to the manner

in which India in the future should be governed.

The House had now arrived at the decision that the debate should proceed no further, and much to the gratification and amusement of those who sat on the side of the Treasury bench the motion of Mr. Cardwell was withdrawn. The collapse of these resolutions, which ardent Liberals had fondly expected would usher in the downfall of the Derby cabinet, and lead to the restoration of those who had lately been in power, was wittily commented upon by Mr. Disraeli, when shortly afterwards he addressed a body of his electors at Slough:—

"The motion was brought forward in the House of Commons," he said to his laughing audience, "by a gentleman of unimpeachable reputation. The 'Cabal,' which has rather a tainted character, chose its instrument with pharisaical accuracy, and I assure you that when Mr. Cardwell rose to impeach me, I was terrified at my own shortcomings as I listened to a *Nisi Prius* narrative, ending with a resolution which I think must have been drawn up by a conveyancer. In the other house of parliament, a still greater reputation condescended to appear on the human stage. Gamaliel himself, with the broad phylacteries of faction on his forehead, called God to witness, in pious terms of majestic adoration, that he was not like other men, and was never influenced by party motives. Well, gentlemen, what happened under these circumstances? Something, I am quite sure, unprecedented in the parliamentary history of England; and when I hear of faction, when I hear of the arts and manœuvres of parties, when I hear sometimes that party spirit will be the ruin of this country, let us take a calm review of what has occurred during the past fortnight, and I think we shall come to the conclusion that, in a country free and enlightened as England, there are limits to party feeling which the most dexterous managers of the passions of man-



kind cannot overpass, and that in the great bulk of parliament, as I am sure, whatever may be their opinions, in the great bulk of the people of the country, there is a genuine spirit of patriotism which will always right itself."

Mr. Disraeli then described the scene which ensued on that memorable evening when the motion of Mr. Cardwell was withdrawn. "There is nothing," he laughed, "like that last Friday evening, in the history of the House of Commons. We came down to the House expecting to divide at four o'clock in the morning; I myself expecting probably to deliver an address two hours after midnight; and I believe that even with the consciousness of a good cause that is no mean effort. Well, gentlemen, we were all assembled, our benches with their serried ranks seemed to rival those of our proud opponents, when suddenly there arose a wail of distress—but not from us; I can only liken the scene to the mutiny of the Bengal army. Regiment after regiment, corps after corps, general after general, all acknowledged that they could not march through Coventry. It was like a convulsion of nature, rather than any ordinary transaction of human life. I can only liken it to one of those earthquakes which take place in Calabria or Peru; there was a rumbling murmur, a groan, a shriek, a sound of distant thunder. No one knew whether it came from the top or the bottom of the House. There was a rent, a fissure in the ground; and then a village disappeared; then a tall tower toppled down; and the whole of the Opposition benches became one great dissolving view of anarchy. Are these the people whom you want to govern the country—people in whose camp there is anarchy, between whom there is discord on every point, and who are not even united by the common bond of wishing to seize upon the spoils of office?"

Shortly before the House rose for the Whitsuntide recess Mr. Disraeli introduced

his budget, which was very favourably received. The financial statement he delivered on that occasion does not call for any detailed notice. It was a lucid business-like proceeding, delivered in a plain straightforward manner, and destitute of all the arts of eloquence and rhetoric. The nation wanted to know what it was to pay and what it was to receive, and the balance sheet was laid before it with all the prose and conciseness of a practised and unsentimental accountant. The expenditure was calculated at £67,110,000, and the revenue at £63,120,000; thus there would be a deficit of £3,990,000, which was to be met by repealing the War Sinking Fund Act, or at least suspending it until the exchequer bonds were provided for, and postponing the payment of these until 1862–63. With regard to new taxation Mr. Disraeli proposed to equalize the duty on spirits, from which he hoped to obtain £500,000; and to introduce a stamp on bankers' cheques, which he anticipated would yield £300,000. Touching the income tax he would support the settlement of 1853. "There are," he said, maintaining the opinions he had always expressed on the subject, "two great classes of reasons why the income tax should not form a permanent feature of our finance. The first class I may call domestic; the second springs rather from considerations of an external character. The feeling of the community generally of the inequality, of the injustice, and of the odious nature of this tax, has unfortunately been sanctioned and concurred in by all those statesmen who have felt the necessity of levying it; and it has been impossible to maintain it for any considerable time, or to adopt it as a permanent feature in our financial system, without great acerbity of feeling and much violent controversy being excited as to its character and its incidence. If you wish to establish it you have an endless crowd of controversies of the most angry character upon these points:—Whether there shall be recognized a difference between property



and income in its assessment; whether, if that difference be not acknowledged, a difference shall be admitted between precarious and permanent incomes; whether there shall be a difference between incomes derived from trade and incomes derived from professions; whether the poor man shall be exempted, and what a poor man really is; what is income, and what are wages; who shall be exempted, where ought the line of exemption to be drawn, and the convenience of an exemption which shall exclude all but those who are called rich. These are some of the subjects of controversy which have always been raised in the country when an attempt has been made to establish the income tax for any lengthened period. These agitations have not of late prevailed. But why, let me ask, has that been the case? It is because in 1853, after a great deal of agitation throughout the country upon this subject had taken place, after a committee had sat for two years to investigate it, and after all sorts of plans and expedients, devised by every manner of man, had been considered in reference to it, an eminent member of this House (Mr. Gladstone) brought forward a great financial scheme in which, acknowledging the impossibility of reconstructing this tax upon principles of justice—upon principles which could satisfy the fair demands and expectations of society—he submitted to the notice of the House a proposition, the effect of which would be to secure its diminution and final extinction at the end of a certain term of years.” Mr. Disraeli then informed the House that it was the intention of the government to adhere to the arrangement of 1853, and in the meanwhile not to propose any increase in the income tax in order to supply the deficit in the revenue.

During the Whitsuntide recess Mr. Disraeli was entertained by the Conservative electors of Bucks at dinner at Slough. Called upon to reply to the toast of “Her Majesty’s Ministers,” he delivered a witty

and vivacious speech, which caused much amusement and excitement at the time, and led to a parliamentary debate. He described how the Conservatives had come into office by the collapse of a government supposed to be omnipotent, but falling suddenly to pieces in a manner altogether unprecedented. He showed how unsatisfactory had been the relations between England and France when Lord Clarendon quitted office, and how the interests of the country had been neglected in the dispute with Naples as to the *Cagliari* affair.\* He commented upon the collapse of Mr. Cardwell’s and Lord Shaftesbury’s resolutions in the terms we have already quoted. He alluded to the difficulties incident to his position, and the manner in which they had been overcome; and then, in a spirit of severe censure, he criticised the unprincipled opposition which the government had to encounter, and the manner in which the Liberal leaders bribed a hitherto independent press by social flatteries. “There existed at this moment,” he said, “that which has not existed in England since the days of Charles II.—a cabal which has no other object but to upset the government of the queen and to obtain its own ends in a manner the most reckless, but the most determined. They have succeeded in doing that which no cabal in modern times, I am proud to say, has yet succeeded in accom-

\* The Sardinian steamer *Cagliari*, trading between Genoa and Tunis, was seized (June 25, 1857) by some armed Sicilians who were on board, and steered by them to the island of Ponza, which they attacked, releasing several prisoners and capturing arms and ammunition. They then landed on the Neapolitan territory, for the purpose of inciting the inhabitants against the government. The vessel, thus left to continue her voyage, was surrendered by the captain to a Neapolitan frigate on the high seas; and her crew, with two English engineers, Watt and Park, were imprisoned at Naples on a charge of having aided in an attempted insurrection on Neapolitan territory. Although eleven of the crew deposed that the English prisoners were ignorant of the objects of the expedition, and had been compelled by force to work the engines, they were kept in close confinement for eight months, till one had lost his reason, and both sustained serious injury to health. They were liberated in consequence of the general indignation of the English people, and the strong representations made to the Neapolitan government by the English foreign secretary, the Earl of Malmesbury. Compensation having been demanded on behalf of the victims, the sum of £3000 was conceded by the authorities at Naples.



plishing; they have, in a great degree, corrupted the once pure and independent press of England. Innocent people in the country, who look to the leading articles in the newspapers for advice and direction—who look to what are called leading organs to be the guardians of their privileges and the directors of their political consciences—are not the least aware, because this sort of knowledge travels slowly, that leading organs now are place-hunters of the cabal, and that the once stern guardians of popular rights simper in the enervating atmosphere of gilded saloons.\* Yes, gentlemen, it is too true that the shepherds who were once the guardians of the flock are now in league with the wolves; and therefore it is that, though we have been only three months in office, though during that space we have vindicated your honour, maintained the peace of Europe, which was in manifest peril, rescued our countrymen from a foreign dungeon, made up a great deficiency in your finances and yet reduced taxation, and laid a deep foundation for your future empire in the East, innocent people in the country who read leading organs believe we are a government that do nothing; that we are a weak government, and not entitled to the confidence of our country."

This speech was severely criticised in the House of Commons both by Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston, and constituted the text for a debate which occupied two nights; in the Upper House it was also commented upon. The late prime minister was, however, its hottest assailant. He examined the speech paragraph by paragraph, and flatly denied the truth of the different statements brought forward. He denied that, when the present government came into office, the country was upon the verge of war with France; and even if that had been the case, such a statement ought not to have been made "in a booth at Slough to a parcel of

carousing electors." He denied that the release of the two English engineers had been due to the exertions of the Conservative government. It was not true that the late ministry had carried on an intrigue to bring about a war between Naples and Sardinia. He denied that the Indian policy of the late government had been one of vengeance and general massacre; and he exercised all his satire with regard to the charge that the Opposition was a cabal. "With reference to the assertion that we are a cabal," said Lord Palmerston, "if the use of that term implies that we are few in number, I have only to say that the result will show which of the two sides has the greatest number in the House. But I deny entirely, if we are a cabal in the sense of a party aiming at upsetting the government, that that is a novel proceeding. To say that there has never been a cabal since the days of Charles II. having for its object to upset the government, is an assertion I did not expect to hear from a quarter so enlightened. Such a thing is no novelty; but I will tell the right hon. gentleman what is such a novelty. It is not that there should be a cabal in opposition, but that there should be a factious government carrying into office all the factious feelings by which they were actuated in opposition; a government which publishes libels on the former advisers of the crown, and on acts of the crown carried out by those former ministers; a factious government that sends forth and publishes, not only to Europe, but to India, principles which, if carried into execution, would lead to the dismemberment of our Indian empire; and a government which, whatever motives it may have been actuated by, publishes to the world a most affronting insult to the highest officer of the crown in any of Her Majesty's dominions."

To these criticisms Mr. Disraeli briefly replied. "What has taken place on this subject," he said, "reminds me of a very unfortunate circumstance that has happened in that country which has been so much

\* An allusion, not, it must be admitted, in the best taste to Mr. Delane, the editor of the *Times*, who was then a frequent guest at Cambridge House, and who, through his great journal, attacked the Conservative policy.

the subject of the remarks of the noble lord. A gentleman of letters, having done, or said, or written something that offended a very powerful army, was called to account by a member of it. He met his opponent without any hesitation, and, in the first instance, conducted himself with fair repute and success. But no sooner was this first affair over than another gentleman was sent for—one whose fierce mien and formidable reputation were such, that his friends thought he would put the matter right. He, too, demands satisfaction; and he is accompanied by a considerable body of other gentlemen, who seem by their appearance to signify that if the second assailant is not more successful than the first, they will find others to succeed him. In short, having somehow or other got into a scrape, they mean to bully him by numbers. . . . The noble lord is quite horrified that I should have spoken in a booth on matters of state policy. Special announcements on matters of state—on matters of peace or war—should be at a carousal in a club-room, such as we may remember; when you invite Her Majesty's officers who are to undertake operations of warfare, and when prime ministers take the chair, and, in what is styled (though not by me) an inebriated assembly, announce for the first time to the country that a great military expedition is to be undertaken.\*

Mr. Disraeli then denied that he had ever said that the country was on the verge of war when the Conservatives came into office; but he had said that war might have taken place at the end, not of weeks or days, but of hours. He freely accepted the statement of Lord Palmerston, that on the retirement of the late government there was no prospect of a war with France. "Of course," sneered Mr. Disraeli, "when there was a government which had avoided answering a despatch which it was sup-

posed conveyed an insult to the people of this country; when there was a government which not only declined answering that supposed insulting despatch, but which also strove to introduce a bill into the House to change the laws of England—it was very easy for such a government to maintain a good understanding with the power whose purposes (that power being at the time entirely misguided) it was then prepared to fulfil. But the moment a change of government took place—the moment there was an administration whose duty it was, in deference to the resolution of the House, to answer in a becoming manner the supposed insulting despatch, and to declare to France that they were not prepared at its instance to recommend any change in the laws of England—the House will at once see that the issues of peace or war became imminent." Yet the firmness of the Conservative government had resulted in the relations between the two countries becoming daily more cordial and satisfactory.

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to re-affirm all his former statements. The English engineers had been freed by the vigour of the present government, which had specially sent an agent to Naples for that purpose; the Indian policy of the late cabinet, based on Lord Canning's proclamation, was one of vengeance, confiscation, and massacre; whilst that of the Conservatives was the superior policy of amnesty, religious toleration, and respect for property. Still Mr. Disraeli said he failed to see why Lord Palmerston should be so sensitive as to charges against the policy of the Liberals, for there was no connection between the great Liberal party and the late government. The great Liberal party was in favour of vote by ballot, the abolition of church rates, the extension of the county franchise—all measures which had certainly not been advocated by the late cabinet. Again, the great Liberal party was in favour of economy, yet no government

\* In allusion to the dinner given at the Reform Club (March 7, 1854) to Admiral Sir Charles Napier previous to his departure with the Baltic fleet. Lord Palmerston took the chair, and the proceedings were characterized throughout, to put it kindly, with much festivity.



could be more guilty of extravagant, reckless, and profuse expenditure than the one lately presided over by the noble lord. There was not the slightest connection between Lord Palmerston and the great Liberal party. Upon every subject there was total want of sympathy and total dissimilarity of views. That old delusion could never again be revived. Mr. Disraeli then touched upon the charge that the Opposition had been stigmatized as a "cabal":—

"The noble lord," said Mr. Disraeli, "complains that they have been called a 'cabal.' What I call a cabal is a body of men, whether it be in this House or in another house—either a private house, or a house devoted to affairs of state—banded together not to carry out a policy, not to recommend by their wisdom and their eloquence measures calculated to win the approving sympathy of the community, but uniting all their resources, their abilities, and their varied influence—for what? to upset the queen's government, without even in so doing declaring any policy of their own, or giving any further clue to their opinions than this—that the first article of their creed is place. It is this conduct which has made the great body of the people of this country look with aversion on those machinations and manœuvres, and has gained for Her Majesty's government the sympathy of all honourable and generous minds. If I wanted to confirm the government in power; if I were anxious to assure a longer tenure of office, I should beg the noble lords to continue their practices. I should be delighted, night after night, if they called on me in this manner to defend statements made to my constituents, not one word of which I retract, and which I made with that due thought which such statements required. I should wish the noble lord to continue this course, for I am quite certain that, whatever difference of opinion there may be in this House or in England between the great Conservative party and the great Liberal

party, there is this one point of union between us—that we are equally resolved, both in this House and throughout the country, no longer to be made the tools or the victims of an obsolete oligarchy."

Parliament was prorogued August 3, 1858, to the following October. The legislative results had not been unfruitful, and compared favourably with the meagre list carried through by the late government. India had been transferred to the crown. The Oaths Bill, so long contended for by Lord John Russell, had become law, and Jews were now to be admitted into parliament.\* A measure had been introduced for the purification of the Thames, which exhaled its unsavoury odours too closely to St. Stephen's. A conference was sitting at Paris to solve several knotty diplomatic questions, and to insure the preservation of general peace. The colony of British Columbia had been established. Altogether the words in the royal speech were justified; the session had been "productive of many important measures."

During the recess several events occurred deserving of passing notice. The treaty of Tien Tsin was ratified, and peace with China established; a treaty of amity and commerce was concluded with Japan; the East India Company was dissolved, and the authority of the queen proclaimed throughout India; and Mr. Gladstone was busy, as lord high commissioner extraordinary, inquiring into the relations between the Ionian Islands and England.

\* The following dates record the history of Jewish persecution and emancipation in this country:—1189, Murder of numerous Jews at the coronation of Richard I. 1269, Jews prohibited from holding freehold property in England. 1290, Jews by order of Edward I. expelled from England; order rescinded by Oliver Cromwell. 1753, A bill passed for the naturalization of Jews in England, but repealed the following year. 1833, Robert Grant's bill for relieving the Jews from civil disabilities rejected by the Lords. 1835, The first Jewish sheriff of London elected. 1837, The first Jew knighted. 1846, Jews placed upon the same footing as Protestant dissenters with respect to their places of worship, schools, &c. 1848, 1851, 1853, and 1857, Lord John Russell's bill rejected by the Lords. 1855, Election of the first Jew as lord mayor. 1858, House of Commons empowered to modify the oaths in such a manner that they might be taken by Jews. 1860, The words "upon the faith of a Christian" expunged permanently in the case of Jewish members.



At the opening of the new year misunderstandings arose between France and Austria, which it was feared would lead to war. Lord Malmesbury appeared on the scene as peacemaker. He urged upon the two powers the wisdom of laying aside mutual suspicion, and endeavouring to promote the regeneration of Italy by a pacific policy. Since Austria was an Italian power he recommended her to begin proceedings, and to ask France to join her in reforming the abuses in the Papal states. "Austria," he wrote, "is an Italian state, and both France and Austria are now occupying the papal territories with their troops. Such a position cannot be lasting; and Her Majesty's government submit to both Austria and France that it is their public duty to terminate if possible a state of things which has become intolerable."

At the opening of parliament (February 3, 1859) Mr. Disraeli, in his reply to the criticism of Lord Palmerston, alluded to the state of foreign affairs. He admitted how unsatisfactory was the condition of Central Italy, and the course that had been pursued with foreign governments to remove the causes of discontent. "While we have done this," he said, "while we have endeavoured, both with regard to France and Austria, to remove the mistrust which has unfortunately arisen between those two great powers—while we have sought to allay the suspicions that have been unhappily excited—while we have placed before them every consideration that could be urged for maintaining that general peace which has been so long preserved, and which has been on the whole so beneficial to the cause of humanity and civilization—while we have done this, we have equally impressed on those two great powers the duty that devolves upon them of entering, not into hostile rivalry for the military command of Italy, but into that more generous emulation of seeking to advance its interests and improve its condition." He then stated that since England was a Protestant power she could not well interfere in the govern-

ment of the Pope; but she had agreed with France and Austria, that if it were necessary to alter the settlement of 1815, with regard to the position of Central Italy, England would assist those powers to her utmost to effect such a result.

Domestic affairs were, however, at this moment of far greater interest than continental politics. The question of parliamentary reform was uppermost in the minds of members, and it had been known during the winter months that Mr. Disraeli was diligent in drawing up a scheme, and that one of the first measures introduced by the Conservative cabinet would be a bill dealing with the representation of the people. Mr. Bright had been stumping the country, giving full vent to the democratic views he entertained upon the subject, and doing his best to create the agitation which had been aroused in 1832. But there was little excitement about the matter outside the walls of St. Stephen's. The country was not exactly apathetic, but it was certainly far from being under the influences of the furor which had once shrieked for "the bill, the whole bill, and nothing but the bill." If a reform bill was passed it would be accepted; if not, the country had no objection to wait a little longer. The subject was more a parliamentary manoeuvre than a national question.

Mr. Disraeli, as we have seen from the speeches given in this work, had never regarded the bill of 1832 as a final measure. "Finality," he said in his sententious way, "is not the language of politics." He had accepted the bill, and had supported its clauses until the Liberals themselves had disapproved of the measure; then he had turned his thoughts to reform—to a thorough rearrangement of the bill, but to no patching up or tinkering with it. He had throughout consistently opposed any piecemeal reform, as his replies to the schemes of Mr. Locke-King plainly prove. Mr. Disraeli clearly explained his views upon the subject in his brief speech on the policy of the government of



Lord Derby, delivered early in the last session (March 15, 1858). Two years after the passing of the Reform Act, when it was said that if the Tories came into power they would alter the bill, Sir Robert Peel rose up in the House of Commons and addressed himself to that question. "He made a compact, as it were," said Mr. Disraeli, "with the country and with parliament. He engaged, with the party of which he was the leader, and with the colleagues with whom he was acting in public life, that he would accept the Reform Act, and he did accept it, heartily and sincerely, as the settlement of a great question, and that, if he found himself in power, he would neither directly nor indirectly attempt to change or tamper with its provisions. And on that compact the Conservative party, as it was called, sincerely and honourably acted; and whenever measures were brought forward to change that Act—not from our side, but from the Liberal party—the Whig ministry were invariably supported by the Conservative party in maintaining intact the spirit and provisions of the Reform Act. At last, and late in the day, 'finality' was deserted; and we were told—and told by the leader of the Whig party—that there must be a new settlement of the question and a new reform bill; and from that moment I held myself free—and I am sure I am expressing the opinions of those with whom I act and of the great body of the Conservative party, not merely in this House, but throughout the country—from that moment we held ourselves free to consider the question of parliamentary reform upon its merits, and that if any future plan were brought forward to change the parliamentary constitution of this country we were open to offer those suggestions which, to our minds, might appear to lead to a settlement most conducive to the public weal."

The result of this freedom of action was now to be apparent. A reform bill had been drawn up by a Conservative cabinet, and it was about to be laid before the

country. Three weeks after the assembling of parliament, Mr. Disraeli rose to move—"That leave be given to bring in a bill to amend the laws relating to the representation of the people in England and Wales, and to facilitate the registration and voting of electors." "Sir," he began, "it is my duty to-night to draw the attention of the House to a theme, than which nothing more important can be submitted to their consideration. Those which are often esteemed the greatest political questions—those questions, for example, of peace or war which now occupy and agitate the public mind—are in fact inferior. In either of those cases an erroneous policy may be retraced; and there are no disasters which cannot be successfully encountered by the energies of a free people; but the principles upon which the distribution of power depends in a community when once adopted can rarely be changed, and an error in that direction may permanently affect the fortunes of a state or the character of a people. But, grave as is the duty and difficult as is the task, which have devolved upon Her Majesty's government in undertaking to prepare a measure to amend the representation of the Commons in this House, these I admit, and cheerfully admit, are considerably mitigated by two circumstances—the absence of all passion on the subject, and the advantage of experience. Whatever may be the causes, on which I care not to dwell, I believe that on this subject and on this occasion I appeal to as impartial a tribunal as is compatible with our popular form of government. I believe there is a general wish among all men of light and leading in this country that the solution of this long-controverted question should be arrived at; and that if public men, occupying the position which we now occupy, feel it their duty to come forward to offer that solution—one which I trust in our case will not be based upon any mean concession or any temporary compromise, but on principles consistent with the spirit of our

constitution, which will bear the scrutiny of debate, and which I trust may obtain the sympathy of public opinion—I feel persuaded that in the present conjuncture of our political world such an attempt will meet from this House with a candid though a discriminating support. And equally it may be observed, that the public mind of this country has for the last quarter of a century, and especially during its latter portion, been so habituated to the consideration of all questions connected with popular representation, the period itself has been so prolific of political phenomena for the contemplation and study, and I may add the instruction, of the people of this country, that we are in a much more favourable position than the statesmen who in 1832 undertook the great office which then devolved upon them, because we address not only a parliament, but a country which has upon this subject the advantage of previous knowledge; and all will agree that this greatly facilitates both discussion and decision. Although some of those who took a leading part in the transactions of 1832, happily for us, still sit in both Houses of Parliament, yet so long is the space of time that has elapsed since those occurrences, I think it is not impossible to speak of them with something of the candour of history. I do not doubt that our future records will acknowledge that, during some of the most important political events of modern history, those events were treated with the energy and the resource becoming British statesmen. If we judge of the Act of 1832 by its consequences, in the measures of this House and in the character of its members, it must be admitted that that policy was equal to the emergency it controlled and directed. I cannot, indeed, agree with those who attribute to the legislation of 1832 every measure of public benefit that has been passed by this House during the last twenty-five years. I know well that before the reform of this House took place the administration of this country was dis-

tinguished by its ability and precision. I believe, indeed, that, especially in the latter part of the administration of Lord Liverpool, this House was rather in advance of the opinion of the country at large. But I think that the reform of the House of Commons in 1832 greatly added to the energy and public spirit in which we had then become somewhat deficient.

“But, sir, it must be remembered that the labours of the statesmen who took part in the transactions of 1832 were eminently experimental. In many respects they had to treat their subject empirically, and it is not to be wondered at if in the course of time it was found that some errors were committed in that settlement; and if, as time rolled on, some, if not many deficiencies, were discovered. I beg the House to consider well those effects of time, and what has been the character of the twenty-five years that have elapsed since the reform of 1832. They form no ordinary period. In a progressive country and a progressive age, progress has been not only rapid, but perhaps precipitate. There is no instance in the history of Europe of such an increase of population as has taken place in this country during this period. There is no example in the history of Europe or of America, of a creation and accumulation of capital so vast as has occurred in this country in those twenty-five years. And I believe the general diffusion of intelligence has kept pace with that increase of population and wealth. In that period you have brought science to bear on social life in a manner no philosopher in his dreams could ever have anticipated; in that space of time you have, in a manner, annihilated both time and space. The influence of the discovery of printing is really only beginning to work on the multitude. It is, therefore, not surprising that in a measure passed twenty-five years ago, in a spirit necessarily experimental, however distinguished were its authors, and however remarkable their ability, some omissions have been found that ought to



be supplied, and some defects that ought to be remedied. In such a state of things a question in England becomes what is called a public question. Thus parliamentary reform becomes a public question; a public question in due course of time becomes a parliamentary question; and then, as it were, shedding its last skin, it becomes a ministerial question."

Mr. Disraeli then alluded to the subject of parliamentary reform having unsuccessfully been introduced in 1852, in 1854, and in 1857 by three cabinets, and to the efforts of independent members to deal with the question by measures of detail, instead of taking a general view and bringing forward a comprehensive plan, which would have effected a fair adjustment of all the controverted points. "This," he continued, "was the state of the question when, a change of government again occurring, the Earl of Derby became responsible for the administration of this country. Let me now ask the House what, in their opinion, was our duty under these circumstances? That, from the peculiar position at which this question had arrived, it might have been practicable by evasion for a time to stave off a solution, I do not say is impossible; but that is a course which, speaking for my colleagues and myself, I may respectfully observe is not at all congenial with our tastes. Were you to allow this question, which the sovereign had three times announced was one that ought to be dealt with—which three prime ministers, among the most skilful and authoritative of our statesmen, had declared it was their intention to deal with—to remain in abeyance? Was it to be left as a means of reorganizing an Opposition? Is that the opinion of either side of this House? Is it the judgment of this House that that is a wholesome position for political questions of the highest quality to occupy? Was parliamentary reform—a subject which touches the interests of all classes and all individuals, and in the wise and

proper settlement of which the very destiny of this country is concerned—to be suffered to remain as a desperate resource of faction; or was it a matter to be grappled with only at a moment of great popular excitement, and settled, not by the reason, but by the passion of the people? Were we to establish, as it were, a chronic irritation in the public mind upon this subject, which, of all others, should not form the staple of our party contests? Were the energies of this country—an ancient country of complicated civilization—were they at this time of day, boasting as we do of a throne that has endured for a thousand years, to be distracted and diverted from their proper objects, the increase of the wealth and welfare of the community, and wasted in a discussion of the principles of our constitution and of what should be the fundamental base of our political institutions? I cannot for a moment believe that this House would think that a posture of affairs which would be free from danger to the empire, or which it would be honourable for any public man to sanction. Having, then, to consider the state of the country with reference to this question, and recalling all those details which on this occasion I feel it incumbent on me to place before the House, the government of the Earl of Derby, on their accession to power, had to inquire what it was their duty to fulfil. And, sir, it was the opinion—the unanimous opinion of the cabinet of the Earl of Derby—that this subject must be dealt with, and dealt with in an earnest and sincere spirit."

Mr. Disraeli then contended, that there had been nothing in the position or antecedents of Lord Derby to preclude him from dealing with the question. Lord Derby, as Mr. Stanley, had served in the cabinet of Earl Grey in 1832, and to his ability and energy much of the success of the Reform Bill had been due. The Conservatives had never opposed any extension of the clauses of the Reform Bill, they had never objected to any measure which was to effect a reconstruction of the House;



but they had frankly said, that if those who had made the settlement of 1832 questioned its propriety and proposed to amend it, the Conservative party would offer no obstruction, but would give to the proposed amendments their candid consideration, making every effort on their part to improve the representation of the people. He, therefore, could not understand the justness of the taunts which had been so freely directed against the Conservative party for entering upon this task.

"Now, sir," proceeded the chancellor of the exchequer, "it appears to me that those who are called parliamentary reformers may be divided into two classes. The first are those whose object I will attempt to describe in a sentence. They are those who would adapt the settlement of 1832 to the England of 1859; and would act in the spirit and according to the genius of the existing constitution. Among these reformers I may be permitted to class Her Majesty's ministers. But, sir, it would not be candid, and it would be impolitic, not to acknowledge that there is another school of reformers, having objects very different from those which I have named. The new school, if I may so describe them, would avowedly effect a parliamentary reform on principles different from those which have hitherto been acknowledged as forming the proper foundations for this House. The new school of reformers are of opinion that the chief, if not the sole object of representation, is to realize the opinion of the numerical majority of the country. Their standard is population; and I admit that their views have been clearly and efficiently placed before the country. Now, sir, there is no doubt population is, and must always be, one of the elements of our representative system. There is also such a thing as property; and that, too, must be considered. I am ready to admit that the new school have not on any occasion limited the elements of their representative system solely to population. They have with a murmur admitted that property has an equal claim to considera-

tion; but then they have said that property and population go together. Well, sir, population and property do go together—in statistics, but in nothing else. Population and property do not go together in politics and practice. I cannot agree with the principles of the new school, either if population or property is their sole, or if both together constitute their double standard. I think the function of this House is something more than merely to represent the population and property of the country. This House, in my opinion, ought to represent all the interests of the country. Now, those interests are sometimes antagonistic often competing, always independent and jealous; yet they all demand a distinctive representation in this House, and how can that be effected, under such circumstances, by the simple representation of the voice of the majority, or even by the mere preponderance of property? If the function of this House is to represent all the interests of the country, you must of course have a representation scattered over the country; because interests are necessarily local. An illustration is always worth two arguments; permit me, therefore, so to explain my meaning—if it requires explanation. Let me take the two cases of the metropolis and that of the kingdom of Scotland, to the representation of which the hon. gentleman opposite (Mr. Baxter) is so much afraid that I should not do justice. The population of the metropolis and that of the kingdom of Scotland are, at this time, about equal. The wealth of the metropolis and the wealth of the kingdom of Scotland are very unequal. The wealth of the metropolis yields a yearly income of £44,000,000—upon which the assessment under the great schedules of the income tax is levied; while the amount upon which such assessment is levied under those schedules in Scotland is only £30,000,000. There is, therefore, the annual difference between £44,000,000 and £30,000,000; yet who would for a moment pretend that the various classes and interests of Scotland



could be adequately represented by the same number of members as represent the metropolis? So much for the population test.

"Let us now take the property test," he continued. "Let us take one portion of that very metropolis to which I have this moment referred. This is an age of statistics. I do not place more value upon them than they deserve; but this is, I believe, at least an accurate memorandum. Let us look to the wealth of the city of London. The wealth of the city of London is more than equivalent to that of twenty-five English and Welsh counties returning forty members, and of 140 boroughs returning 232 members. The city of London, the city proper, is richer than Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham put together. Or take another and even more pregnant formula. The city of London is richer than Bristol, Leeds, Newcastle, Sheffield, Hull, Wolverhampton, Bradford, Brighton, Stoke-upon-Trent, Nottingham, Greenwich, Preston, East Retford, Sunderland, York, and Salford combined—towns which return among them no less than thirty-one members. Yet the city of London has not asked me to insert it in the bill which I am asking leave to introduce, for thirty-one members. . . . So much for the population test, and so much for the property test, if you are to reconstruct this House on either of those principles; but the truth is, that men are sent to this House to represent the opinions of a place, and not its power. We know very well what takes place at a parliamentary election in this country. The man of princely fortune has, when he goes to the poll, no more votes than the humble dweller in a £10 house; because we know very well that his wealth, his station, and his character will give him the influence which will adequately represent his property; and the constitution shrinks from a plurality of votes in such a case. The constitution also shrinks from the enjoyment of a plurality of votes by large towns

by means of seats in this House. It wants the large towns and cities of England to be completely represented. It wishes to see the members for Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham in their places, ready to express the views of those powerful and influential communities; and it recognizes them as the representatives of the opinions of those places, but not as the representatives of their power and influence. Because what happens to the rich man at a contested election will happen to these places. Why, sir, the power of the city of London or that of the city of Manchester in this House is not be measured by the honourable and respectable individuals whom they send here to represent their opinions. I will be bound to say that there is a score—nay, that there are three score—members in this House who are as much and more interested, perhaps, in the city of Manchester than those who are in this House its authoritative and authentic representatives; and when a question arises in which the interests of Manchester, Liverpool, or Birmingham are concerned, the influence of those places is shown by the votes of persons so interested in their welfare, as well as by those of the respectable and respected individuals who are sent here to represent them.

"Look at the metropolis itself, not speaking merely of the city of London. Is the influence of the metropolis in this House to be measured by the sixteen hon. members who represent it, and who represent it, I have no doubt, in a manner perfectly satisfactory to their constituents, or they would not be here? No! We all of us live in the metropolis; many of the members of this House have property, a few of them very large property in it; and, therefore, the indirect influence of the metropolis in this House is not to be measured merely by the number of members which it returns to parliament. So much for that principle of population, or that principle of property, which has been adopted by some, or that principle of population and property com-



bined, which seems to be the more favourite form. It appears to me that the principle, as one upon which the popular representation in this House ought to be founded, is fallacious and erroneous. There is one remarkable circumstance connected with the new school, who would build up our representation on the basis of a numerical majority, and who take population as their standard. It is this—that none of their principles apply except in cases where population is concentrated. The principle of population is, although I cannot say a favourite doctrine, because I do not think it is so, a very notorious doctrine at the present moment; but it is not novel, although introduced at a comparatively recent period into our politics. It was broached in the discussions which took place when the former reform bills were brought in by preceding governments. It was the favourite argument of the late Mr. Hume. His argument for parliamentary reform—a subject which he frequently brought before the House—was generally this; he took some unfortunate borough in the west of England; he described it as a borough with a very small population and very little business, and he said:—

This borough returns two members to parliament, while the great city of Manchester, with its population of hundreds of thousands, and with half the business of the world concentrated in its circle, only returns the same number. Can anything be more monstrous? Disfranchise the small borough, and give its members to the city of Manchester.

“Such was the argument which for several years passed in this House unchallenged. Mr. Hume brought forward his motion for parliamentary reform in 1852, when, by a somewhat curious coincidence, I was occupying the same seat which I now fill, and it fell to my lot to make a reply to him. I stated then what I had long felt, that although I entirely rejected the principle of population, still, admitting it for the sake of argument to be a right principle, we must arrive at conclusions

exactly the reverse of those which Mr. Hume and the school which he founded were perpetually impressing upon the public mind. The principle in my opinion is false, and would produce results dangerous to the country, and fatal to the House of Commons. But if it be true—if it be our duty to reform the representation upon it—then I say you must arrive at conclusions entirely different from those which the new school has adopted. If population is to be the standard, and you choose to disfranchise small boroughs and small constituencies, it is not to the great towns you can, according to your own principle, transfer their members.”

Mr. Disraeli then dealt with certain returns which he had formerly quoted to the House,\* proving that if they came to population in round numbers 10,500,000 of the people of England returned only 150 or 160 county members, while the boroughs representing 7,500,000 returned more than 330 members. If they admitted the principle of population they must disfranchise the boroughs, and give their members to the counties.

“Let us now see, sir,” he continued, “what will be the consequence if the population principle is adopted. You would have a House, generally speaking, formed partly of great landowners and partly of great manufacturers. I have no doubt that, whether we look to their property or to their character, there would be no country in the world which could rival in respectability such an assembly. But would it be a House of Commons—would it represent the country—would it represent the various interests of England? Why, sir, after all, the suffrage and the seat respecting which there is so much controversy and contest, are only means to an end. They are means by which you may create a representative assembly that is a mirror of the mind as well as of the material interests of England. You want in this House every element that obtains

\* See pp. 142, 143 of this work.



the respect and engages the interest of the country. You must have lineage and great territorial property; you must have manufacturing enterprise of the highest character; you must have commercial weight; you must have professional ability in all its forms; but you want something more—you want a body of men not too intimately connected either with agriculture, or with manufactures, or with commerce; not too much wedded to professional thought and professional habits; you want a body of men representing the vast variety of the English character; men who would arbitrate between the claims of those great predominant interests; who would temper the acerbity of their controversies. You want a body of men to represent that considerable portion of the community who cannot be ranked under any of those striking and powerful classes to which I have referred, but who are in their aggregate equally important and valuable, and perhaps as numerous.

"Hitherto you have been able to effect this object; you have effected it by the existing borough system, which has given you a number of constituencies of various dimensions distributed over the country. No one for a moment pretends that the borough system in England was originally framed to represent all the classes and interests of the country; but it has been kept and cherished because the people found that, although not directly intended for such a purpose, yet indirectly it has accomplished that object; and hence I lay it down as a principle that if you subvert that system, you are bound to substitute for it machinery equally effective. That is all I contend for. I am not wedded to arrangements merely because they exist; but what I hope this House will not sanction is, that we should remove a machinery which performs the office we desire, unless we are certain that we can substitute for it a machinery equally effective. Now, there is one remarkable feature in the agitation of the new school.

It is not that they offer for the system they would subvert a substitute; it is not that they offer us new machinery for the old machinery they would abrogate; but it is a remarkable circumstance that they offer no substitute whatever. They lay down their inexorable principle; they carry it to its logical consequences, and the logical consequences would be that to this House, in the present state of the population, no doubt you would have men returned by large constituencies who would, in most instances, represent great wealth. I will make that concession; but when this House is assembled, how will it perform the duties of a House of Commons? I will tell you what must be the natural consequence of such a state of things. The House will lose, as a matter of course, its hold on the Executive. The House will assemble; it will have men sent to it, no doubt, of character and wealth, the great majority of them matured and advanced in life; and having met here, they will be unable to carry on the Executive of the country. Why? Because the experiment has been tried in every country, and the same result has occurred; because it is not in the power of one or two classes to give that variety of character and acquirement by which the administration of a country can be carried on. Well, then, if this House loses its hold over the Executive of the country, what happens? We fall back on a bureaucratic system, and we should find ourselves, after all our struggles, in the very same position from which in 1640 we had to extricate ourselves. Your administration would be carried on by a court minister, perhaps a court minion. It might not be in these times, but in some future time. The result of such a system would be to create an assembly where the members of parliament, though chosen by great constituencies, would be chosen from limited classes, and perhaps only from one class of the community. There is a new school of philosophers who hold that there is no such thing as progress—that nations move

in a circle, and that after a certain cycle they arrive at exactly the same place, and stand in precisely the same circumstances which they quitted two or three centuries before. I have no time now to solve a problem of that depth. Questions so profound require the leisure and abstraction of the Opposition benches. But if the population principle should be adopted, I should give in my adhesion to the new school of philosophy; and I feel persuaded that the House of Commons, after all its reform and reconstruction, would find itself in the same comparatively ignominious position from which the spirit and energy of the old English gentry emancipated it more than two centuries ago. Therefore I need not inform the House that it is no part of my duty to recommend it to adopt that principle. We cannot acknowledge that population, or property, or even property and population joined together, should be the sole principle on which the legislative system shall be constructed."

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to discuss the details of the measure he had drawn up. He did not propose to alter the limits of the franchise, but to introduce into boroughs a new kind of franchise, founded upon personal property, and to give a vote to persons having property to the amount of £10 a year in the funds, bank stock, and East India stock. Also a person having £60 in the savings bank would, under the bill, be an elector for the borough in which he resided, as well as the recipients of pensions in the naval, military, and civil services amounting annually to £20. Dwellers in a portion of a house whose aggregate rent was £20 a year, would likewise have a vote. The suffrage would also be conferred upon graduates of the universities, ministers of religion, members of the legal profession and of the medical body, and upon certain schoolmasters. He had preferred to introduce this new kind of franchise into boroughs, instead of attempting to lower it. For such preference Mr. Disraeli gave the following reason:—

"I am ready to admit," he said, "that there are many persons quite capable of exercising the suffrage who do not live in £10 houses, and whom I should wish to see possessing the suffrage. But should we obtain that result by—I won't call it the vulgar expedient, because the epithet might be misinterpreted, though I should not use it in an offensive sense—but by the coarse and common expedient which is recommended, of what is called 'lowering the franchise in towns?' Now, I beg the House to consider for a moment what must be the effect of lowering the franchise in towns. Suppose that, instead of a £10 borough qualification, you had a £5 borough qualification? Well, the moment that you had a £5 borough qualification you would realize all those inconvenient results which are erroneously ascribed to the £10 qualification. You would then have a monotonous constituency. You would then have a constituency whose predominant opinions would be identical. You would then have a constituency who would return to parliament members holding the same ideas, the same opinions, the same sentiments; and all the variety which represents the English character would be entirely lost. You would then have in your borough constituency a predominant class; and certainly the spirit and genius of our constitution are adverse to the predominance of any class in this House. It certainly would be most injudicious, not to say intolerable, when we are guarding ourselves against the predominance of a territorial aristocracy and the predominance of a manufacturing and commercial oligarchy, that we should reform parliament by securing the predominance of a household democracy. I am convinced that that is not the mode in which you must improve and vary the elements of the present borough constituency."

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to deal with the county franchise, prefacing his remarks with a review of the controversy respecting the Chandos clause in the bill of 1832.



The government were desirous of putting an end to the heart-burnings arising from that clause,\* and of restoring the county constituency to its natural state, and of bringing about a general content and sympathy between the different portions of the constituent body. To effect this object the principle of identity of suffrage between the counties and towns would be recognized. "If the suffrages of the town are transferred to the county," explained Mr. Disraeli, "and the suffrages of the county transferred to the town, all those voters who, dwelling in a town, exercise their suffrage in the county by virtue of a county suffrage, will record their votes in the town; and the freeholder, resident in a town—subject to provisions in the bill which would prevent this constitutional instrument being turned to an improper use—will have a right to vote for the borough in which he resides. This, as well as the franchise founded on savings-banks, will open another avenue to the mechanic, whose virtue, prudence, intelligence, and frugality entitle him to enter into the privileged pale of the constituent body of the country. If this principle be adopted, a man will vote for the place where he resides, and with which he is substantially connected. Therefore the first measure would embody this logical consequence, that it would transfer the freeholders of the town from the county to the town." Boundary commissioners, appointed by the inclosure commissioners, were to visit the English boroughs, rearrange them, and adapt them to the altered circumstances of the times. Mr. Disraeli estimated that the effect of giving to coun-

ties a £10 franchise would add 200,000 to the county constituency.

The speaker then proceeded to state how the elective body was to be registered, and how it was to vote. Overseers of parishes would be required to furnish a list of owners as well as occupiers, which would be a self-acting register. The number of polling places was to be increased; every parish having 200 electors was to possess a polling place; every voter was to vote in the place where he resided, and those who preferred it might vote by polling papers instead of going to the hustings, due precautions being provided against fraud and personation.

Mr. Disraeli next had to deal with the delicate question of redistribution. "In attempting to deal with the question popularly designated parliamentary reform," he said, "Her Majesty's government have endeavoured, so far as their intelligence could guide them, to offer a proposition to the House which, consistently with their conception of the principles upon which the English constitution is founded, should secure for this country a complete representation. One of our first considerations was, of course, the electoral body, upon which I have treated at such length. But a complete representation does not depend merely upon the electoral body, however varied you may make its elements, however homogeneous its character. It also depends upon whether, in your system, the different interests of the country are adequately represented. Now, discarding for ever that principle of population upon which it has been my duty to make some remarks; accepting it as a truth that the functions of this House are to represent not the views of a numerical majority—not merely the gross influence of a predominant property, but the varied interests of the country—we have felt on this occasion it was incumbent on us diligently and even curiously to investigate the whole of England, and see whether there were interests not represented in this House whose views we should wish to be heard here; and

\* The Chandos clause was the 20th clause of the Reform Bill of 1832. It gave the right of voting to the occupiers of lands or tenements of a rent of not less than £50 per annum. It had been moved as an amendment in committee of the reform bill of 1831, by the Marquis of Chandos, afterwards Duke of Buckingham. It was opposed by Lord John Russell, but supported by Mr. Hume and other Liberals, who were desirous of as wide an extension of the suffrage as possible; and was carried against the government by a majority of eighty-four, August 18, 1831. Ministers incorporated it in their measure, and although that Reform Bill was rejected by the House of Lords, the clause was introduced in the bill of 1832, and was carried, on a division, by a majority of 240.

whether the general representation of the country could be matured and completed. In undertaking this office, it must not be supposed that we have been animated by a feeling that we would only do that which the hard necessity of the case required. Had we been so influenced, it is possible we might have brought forward a measure that would have served the purpose of the moment, and yet left seeds behind us which might have germinated in future troubles, controversies, and anxieties. We have been sincerely desirous to adapt the scheme of 1832 to the England of 1859, and to induce the House to come to a general settlement, whether as regards the exercise of the franchise or the direct representation in this House of the various interests of the community, which should take this question for a long period out of the agitating thoughts of men. We have sought to offer to the country, in the hope that it will meet with its calm and serious approval, what we believe to be a just and, I will not say a final, but conclusive settlement. Finality, sir, is not the language of politics. But it is our duty to propose an arrangement which, so far as the circumstances of the age in which we live can influence our opinion, will be a conclusive settlement. And we have laid it down as our task to consider, without any respect to persons, what we honestly think are the interests of the country that are not represented, but which we should at this moment counsel the House to add to their numbers."

The deliberations of the government had ended in the following recommendations:—Four members were to be added to the West Riding of Yorkshire, two to South Lancashire, and two to Middlesex. The towns of Hartlepool, Birkenhead, West Bromwich, Wednesbury, Burnley, Staley-bridge, Croydon, and Gravesend, were to be represented. These additions were to be effected by the towns of Honiton, Thetford, Totness, Harwich, Evesham, Wells, Richmond, Marlborough, Leominster, Lym-

ington, Ludlow, Andover, Knaresborough, Tewkesbury, and Maldon, sending in the future only one member instead of two to parliament. Mr. Disraeli declined to interfere with the Roman Catholic borough of Arundel, and he gave his reasons. "In all those rattling schemes," he said, "of disfranchisement with which we were favoured during the autumn, when every gentleman thought he could sit down at his table and reconstruct the venerable fabric of the English constitution—if there was one point more than another on which these Utopian meddlers agreed—if there was one enemy which they were all resolved to hunt to death—it was the borough of Arundel. There every vice of the system seemed to be congregated—a small population, a small constituency, absolute nomination. Well now, sir, that is very well for autumnal agitation; but let us see how it practically works in this ancient and famous community in which it is our pride and privilege to live. There are 900,000 Roman Catholics in England, scattered and dispersed in every town and county—of course a minority. What means have they of being represented in this House, especially in the present, as I deem it, unfortunate state of feeling in England with regard to our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects? There is one English Roman Catholic member of parliament, a man who bears a name that will ever be honoured by England and Englishmen; and practically, and in the spirit of the English constitution, the 900,000 Roman Catholics of England, men, many of them, of ancient lineage and vast possessions, whose feelings all must respect, even if they do not agree with them in every particular, find a representative in the borough of Arundel. That is the practical working of our constitution. You talk of the small numbers of the constituency of Arundel; 900,000 Roman Catholics! Why, it is more than the West Riding of Yorkshire; it is double the Tower Hamlets."



Mr. Disraeli thus concluded his speech:—  
“I have now, sir, touched upon those topics which it was my duty to lay before the House this evening. I have omitted many things that I ought to have said, and I have no doubt I may have said some things that I ought to have omitted. Such errors are inevitable in treating so large and so various a theme, but I am sure the House will remember that there will be many opportunities for me to enter into necessary explanations, and will treat an occasion like the present with generous forbearance. Sir, having described as clearly as I could the principal provisions of our bill to the House, I shall say no more. I believe that this is a measure wise, prudent, and adequate to the occasion. I earnestly hope the House may adopt it. I believe it is a Conservative measure, using that epithet in no limited or partial sense, but in the highest and holiest interpretation of which it is capable. I can say sincerely that those who framed this measure are men who reverence the past, are proud of the present, but are confident of the future. Such as it is, I now submit it for the consideration of the House of Commons, convinced that they will deal with it as becomes the representatives of a wise and understanding people.”

Such were the provisions of the first reform bill framed by a Conservative cabinet. The scheme was, as Mr. Disraeli had avowed, eminently conservative. It did not, like that proposed by Mr. Bright, reform parliament at the expense of the constitution, but preserved all that was deserving, and removed much that had led to abuse. It extended the area without changing the balance of power. It proved the falseness of the theory that a numerical majority ought to govern the land of a free country. It recognized that the purpose of popular institutions was to represent the varied and numerous interests of which a free and wealthy community was composed. It was not conceived in a spirit hostile to existing institutions, but was based on the assumption that such institutions were substantially conformable to the wishes of the people, and adequate to their wants. Unlike the various radical schemes propounded during the autumn, though it admitted that the popular power might be safely extended, it refused to place the intelligence or the wealth of the country at the mercy of a numerical majority. In short, it altered the distribution of political power, but did not revolutionize it. Yet, in spite of these recommendations, it was to share, as we shall see, the fate of its predecessors.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### AGAIN IN OPPOSITION.

THERE are certain measures about which, when introduced to parliament, it becomes difficult to foretell their future; they apparently receive the approval of the House of Commons, they are supported by the press, the country appears in favour of them, and it is only when subsequently criticised and examined in committee, that we are able to decide whether acceptance or rejection is to be their lot. On the other hand, there are measures about which there is no uncertainty; from the very night when the House accords its leave for them to be brought in their success is assured, and before the first reading they are virtually enrolled in the statute-book. Again, there are measures upon which both the House and the country swiftly decide, and resolve to have none of them. The Conservative Reform Bill belonged to this last class. Before the debate of the first night had closed, it was evident that the measure was doomed to rejection. Two circumstances adverse to its progress had occurred at the very outset of its career. The cabinet was not unanimous as to the clauses in the bill, and two ministers had tendered their resignations. The disagreement had arisen upon the extension of the county franchise, which was strongly disapproved of both by Mr. Spencer Walpole, and by that accurate interpreter of county instincts, Mr. Henley. Writing to Lord Derby a month before the bill was laid upon the table of the House, Mr. Walpole said, "I regret to say that I am about to take the most painful step which I have ever had to take in the whole of my life. I am going to request you to place my resignation in Her Majesty's hands, because I find it utterly impossible for me to sanction or countenance the course of

policy which the government have now determined to adopt on the important subject of parliamentary reform. I cannot help saying that the measure which the cabinet are prepared to recommend is one which we should all of us have stoutly opposed, if either Lord Palmerston or Lord John Russell had ventured to bring it forward. Under all these circumstances, I have no alternative but to repeat the request with which I commenced; and I shall therefore consider myself as only holding the seals of office until you can conveniently fill up my place." Mr. Henley offered similar objections, and adopted the same course as Mr. Walpole.

Thus the bill came before parliament with the damaging reputation of a measure upon which the cabinet had been divided, and which had led to the secession of two of its more important members. There was also another unfavourable circumstance. By an official fraud, which has never yet been discovered, the scheme of the reform bill had appeared in the *Times* several hours before Mr. Disraeli rose up to lay his measure before the House. Hence, members had possessed the unusual advantage of carefully studying the scope and tendency of a bill before it had been introduced. First impressions are not always permanent, but they have it in their power to exercise no little influence upon the mind of a nation at a critical moment. Members who were opposed to the bill were able, on the very night it was announced, to rise one after the other and offer a searching and carefully considered criticism upon the subject which, when reproduced next morning in the newspapers, tended at once to prejudice the country against the government scheme. A measure



must be very strong in itself, or else be very strongly supported, to brave at the outset no mere impromptu objections, but those based on a studied and deliberate investigation of its merits.

No sooner had Mr. Disraeli taken his seat, after a speech of three hours and a half, than the popular chamber resounded with criticisms, objections, and remonstrances. Few—very few—on the night of its introduction were in favour of the bill. The majority were undoubtedly hostile. The Scotch members complained that the interests of Scotland had not been fairly dealt with in the bill. Irish members followed suit. The disfranchisement of those persons who voted for counties in respect of property within boroughs was strongly disapproved of. The right of voting in boroughs to be conferred upon the 40s. freeholders was objected to, since there was no description of vote so easily fabricated as that of the 40s. freeholders. The extension of the franchise to lodgers would, it was said, open a great door to fraud. Then it was made matter for loud complaint that the franchise in the boroughs throughout the country had not been extended; that the working classes were not fairly dealt with; the bill, other Radicals grumbled, would not give one iota of power to the working classes of the country; and that the "fancy franchises," as Mr. Bright called them, were absurd. The spirit of the Opposition was sounded in the concluding words of Mr. Roebuck, "I say emphatically that every stage of the bill must be opposed; steadfastly opposed by every friend of the people in the House."

When objections had run their course, Mr. Disraeli replied. He dealt first with the two reasons which Lord John Russell had brought forward as causing him to disapprove of the bill. "The noble Lord," said Mr. Disraeli, "rests his opposition to this measure on two grand principles. First of all, he cannot consent to any measure which disfranchises in counties the ancient freeholds which have existed for three or

four hundred years. I have had to look into this subject, and I am sorry to say that the great majority of the freeholds which I have considered are not of that ancient duration. They are of much more modern days, and have been created in a much simpler and more manufacturing style than the territorial traditions of the noble lord seem to contemplate. "But," says the noble lord, "I will never consent to it; I will never be party to a bill which disfranchises the hard-working man." What did the noble lord do in his last reform bill. What was the first feature in his last bill? Why, a proposition to disfranchise all the freemen in England. So much for this principle of the noble lord. A great and perilous innovation to restrict the borough freeholders to vote in the locality in which their qualification exists! Why, if I mistake not, it was part of the first reform bill. It is an innovation which has been discussed in this House often and often; that was projected by the political colleagues of the noble lord, and which has, I believe, been accepted by the good sense of the country for a considerable period. It is clear that the moment you consider the county franchise in the spirit in which, on the part of the government, I have attempted to consider it to-day, the moment you put an end to that exclusive character which has been complained of in this debate, you must give the counties, not to any particular order or exclusive class, but to the inhabitants of the counties, and those who have a substantial local interest in them; and I feel persuaded that the justness of this arrangement, the logical sequence, as it is, of recognizing the identity of the suffrage, will not meet with that fate which has been predicted for it by honourable gentlemen below the gangway, but will be accepted by the good sense of the country."

Mr. Disraeli then touched upon the complaint that nothing had been done in the bill for the working classes. "What we have done for the working classes," explained the chancellor of the exchequer, "may not sound

so large as some of the plans which are commonly advocated for their advancement. There is nothing more easy than to make a speech, and say that you are in favour of the working classes, and that you think they ought to have this power and that privilege; but then you," he said, addressing the Opposition, "never pass any measures to do anything for the working classes. The working classes will, I think, be sensible of the advantage which they will derive from this measure, which I hope and believe will pass. Here are two avenues to the constituent power open to all working men who possess those qualities which would entitle them to exercise that power—the savings bank suffrage and the 40s. freehold. The honourable gentleman (Mr. Bright) tells me that we know nothing of the working classes, and arrogates to himself the peculiar privilege of being acquainted with their wants, wishes, and requirements. He says that I can know nothing about the working classes, that I only talk to my friends behind me, and that they know nothing about the working classes. My friends know much more than the honourable gentleman thinks, and I can assure him that I do converse with others than my friends, and that I have as good means as he has of learning what are the feelings of the working classes. I will tell the honourable gentleman the things that have been represented to me, on what I believe to be the very best authority, and from members of the working classes most distinguished by their personal and moral qualities and intelligence. There were two things which they impressed upon me. Not knowing of the 40s. franchise, they said that that which they valued most of all was the savings bank suffrage; and that in which they had the least confidence were the propositions of the honourable member for Birmingham.\* They told me

that they could not trust the honourable member for Birmingham; they were not satisfied that under his plan the working men would exercise that privilege. But they said—'We clearly understand what a savings bank suffrage means.' We may invent more, we may devise other schemes, but this is a great boon, and one that will be much appreciated by the working classes. I believe that is the case."

Mr. Disraeli then concluded by denying that Scotland had been treated cavalierly, and that if Ireland wished it her case with regard to reform would be duly considered. In the interval between the first and second reading of the bill, it became apparent that the measure, the more it was discussed, the more it was disapproved of. Mr. Walpole and Mr. Henley had openly stated the reasons which had now forced them to retire from the cabinet, and their withdrawal had not tended to strengthen the hands of the government. The chief objection was directed against the clause which proposed to take away from freeholders in boroughs the franchise by which they were qualified to vote for counties; this proposal was regarded by many as an indirect method of neutralizing the concession of the county franchise to the £10 freeholders, and excited much opposition. A few days after the introduction of the bill, Lord John Russell gave notice that he would move the following resolution:—"That this House is of opinion that it is neither just nor politic to interfere, in the manner proposed in this bill, with the freehold franchise as hitherto exercised in the counties in England and Wales; and that no readjustment of the franchise will satisfy this House or the country, which does not provide for a greater extension of the suffrage in cities and boroughs than is contemplated in the present measure."

In the memorable debate (March 21, officer on the county or borough rate; he prescribed that votes should be taken by ballot; he wholly disfranchised eighty-six boroughs, taking away one member from thirty-four other boroughs, and transferring the seats thus obtained to the larger towns, counties, and divisions of counties.

\* In the reform bill that Mr. Bright had proposed to his enthusiastic auditors at Birmingham, Manchester, and Glasgow, he conferred the borough franchise on all persons rated to the relief of the poor, and on all lodgers who paid a rent of ten pounds; he reduced the franchise in the counties to a ten-pound rental, laying the expenses of the returning-



1859) on the second reading of the bill, which lasted several nights, Lord John Russell began the discussion by moving his amendment. The principle of the bill was, he said, that the suffrage throughout the country in counties and boroughs should be uniform, or as Mr. Disraeli expressed it, identical. That principle, he contended, would completely change the constitution of the country, destroy ancient rights, deprive worthy persons of their county votes, and take away from the country constituencies one of the liberal elements. Small boroughs would be flooded with faggot votes; "say that 40s. freeholds may be formed in boroughs, and what remains of the independence they acquired from the £10 franchise?" He considered the bill "to be a measure of a most noxious, injurious, and dangerous character." Mr. Sidney Herbert supported the amendment. The object of the House was, he said, "to arrive at a franchise moderately extended for boroughs, and largely extended for counties." He disputed the validity of the uniformity of suffrage as a security against indefinite extension of the franchise, and justified the retaining the small boroughs. Mr. Bright considered that the bill got rid of the most independent electors from counties, and insidiously proposed to alter the boundaries of boroughs to complete the work. Its object was to make the representation of counties more exclusively territorial, which was most undesirable. Lord Palmerston complained that the government had inserted in their bill provisions totally inconsistent with the principles of the constitution, committing an act of injustice against those county freeholders who happened to reside in boroughs, and identifying the town and county franchise, thereby destroying an ancient principle of the constitution which provided for a marked distinction between them, and actually establishing electoral districts. He thus concluded:—

"Some persons say the ministry will resign. Sir, I believe no such thing. I

think it will be a dereliction of duty on their part if they do resign. I do not want them to resign. I say to them, as I think Voltaire said of some minister who had incurred his displeasure, 'I won't punish him; I won't send him to prison; I condemn him to keep his place.' They took the government with its engagements. They undertook a measure of reform, and they will be finching from their duty to the crown and the country if, in consequence of such a vote as that proposed by my noble friend, they fling up their places, and throw upon us the difficulty of dealing with this subject. In ordinary cases, I am quite ready to admit, when a question arises out of the contests of two political parties—when that question is one, for instance, relating to our foreign relations—a question of peace or war, or one of general policy, with respect to which the government and the majority of the House of Commons may disagree—it would be a perfectly constitutional course for them to pursue to appeal to the country, and that the majority by whom their conduct happened to be censured should afford them every facility in making that appeal; that, however, is not the present question. Is it right, I ask, that the government should throw the British constitution to be scrambled for and discussed upon every hustings throughout the country? Is that the course which a Conservative administration thinks it its duty to pursue? I do not believe they would act so if they could; and I believe they could not if they would."

Sir James Graham said the bill was "too clever by half," and that it had been so framed as to obtain support from every quarter of the House; the imperfections of 1832, he contended, instead of being removed were aggravated by this Conservative measure. Mr. Gladstone opposed both the bill and the amendment. He could not, he observed, be a party to the disfranchisement of the county freeholders residing in boroughs; nor a party to the uniformity of the franchise, nor a party to a reform

bill which did not lower the suffrages in boroughs. Upon the advantages of retaining the smaller boroughs he thus expressed himself. In a former portion of this work we have stated how serviceable were the nomination boroughs to young men of ability, and perhaps of slender fortunes, who were desirous of embracing a parliamentary career; at the present day the clever but poor young man is practically excluded from the House of Commons. "Allow me," Mr. Gladstone said, "in explanation of my meaning, to state the case of six men—Mr. Pelham, Lord Chatham, Mr. Fox, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Canning, and Sir Robert Peel. Mr. Pelham entered this House for the borough of Seaford, in 1719, at the age of twenty-two; Lord Chatham entered it in 1735, for Old Sarum, at the age of twenty-six; Mr. Fox in 1764, for Midhurst, at the age, I think, of twenty; Mr. Pitt in 1781, for Appleby, at the age of twenty-one; Mr. Canning in 1793, for Newport, at the age of twenty-two; and Sir Robert Peel in 1809, for the City of Cashel, at the age of twenty-one. Now here are six men, every one of whom was a leader in this House. I take them because the youngest is older than the youngest of those who now sit here, and because the mention of their names can give rise to no personal feeling. Here are six men whom you cannot match out of the history of the British House of Commons for the hundred years which precede our own day. Every one of them was a leader in this House; almost every one of them was a prime minister. All of them entered parliament for one of those boroughs where influence of different kinds prevailed. Every one of them might, if he had chosen, after giving proof of his powers in this House, have sat for any of the open constituencies of the country; and many of them did so. Mr. Pelham, after sitting for Seaford in one parliament, represented Sussex for all the rest of his life; Lord Chatham never, I think, represented an open constituency; Mr. Fox, after sitting for Midhurst, became the chosen for West-

minster; Mr. Pitt went from Appleby at a very early age to the University of Cambridge; Mr. Canning went from Newport to Liverpool; and Sir Robert Peel from Cashel to the University of Oxford. Now, what was the case of Sir Robert Peel? The university, on account of a conscientious difference of opinion, refused the continuance of his services. They might have been lost to the British parliament—at that moment at all events. But in Westbury he found an immediate refuge—for so it must be called; and he continued to sit for a small borough for the remainder of his life. Mr. Canning, in the same way, not losing but resigning the representation of Liverpool, found it more conducive to the public business that he should become the representative of a small borough for the rest of his days. What does this show? It shows that small boroughs were the nursery-ground in which these men were educated—men who not only were destined to lead this House, to govern the country, to be the strength of England at home and its ornament abroad, but who likewise, when once they had an opportunity of proving their powers in this House, became the chosen of large constituencies, and the favourites of the nation."

On the Conservative side of the House the two ablest defenders of the government measure were Sir Hugh Cairns and Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton. The debate was brought to a close by the chancellor of the exchequer (March 31, 1859). "After seven nights' debate," he began, "conducted with a vigour and variety which have sustained the reputation of the House, it is now my duty to examine how far that measure which, five weeks ago, I had the honour to introduce on the part of the ministry, has been affected by this discussion, and to indicate the course which Her Majesty's government think it their duty to recommend to the House this night to adopt with respect to it. Sir, it is some ten years since, or nearly so, that the prime minister of this country, then



the leader of this House, occupying the very seat which I now fill, and being one of the principal promoters and projectors of the Reform Act of 1832, announced the deliberate opinion of himself and of his cabinet to be that the famous settlement of 1832 was, in their judgment, no longer satisfactory and sufficient. And from that period unto the present, with successive ministries formed from different parties, the same opinion has been held, the same advice to parliament has been given. The crown has been pledged—the parliament has been pledged—the ministry has been pledged—to attempt to amend the representation of the people; but this is the first occasion on which a bill with that object has been offered to this House for the second reading; and how am I met under these circumstances?

“Now, what is this bill which I have introduced? It is founded on three great principles. And we have had so much discussion about principles and about details, that the House will permit me to remind it what those three great principles are. The first principle is, that the constituent body of this country shall be increased by the introduction to it of a large number of persons, and of a vast variety of the population, who shall in future possess the suffrage. Under this bill, in pursuance of that principle, I believe as great an addition would be made to the constituent body as was made by the Reform Act of 1832. By the Reform Act of 1832 I believe 400,000 persons were added to the constituency. By the bill which I introduced to the House five weeks ago, I believe that a number certainly not less than that will be added to the present electoral body. The second principle on which this bill is founded is, that those large communities whose wealth and population and distinctive character have been developed since the Act of 1832 shall be summoned to direct representation in this House. That is the second great principle. The third prin-                   hat this bill main-

tains generally the present borough system of representation in this country, on the ground that no efficient substitute has yet been offered for it; and on the ground also that it is the only means by which you can obtain an adequate representation of the various interests and classes of the country; and that all other proposed changes would only lead to the predominance of a numerical majority of the population. Now, these are the three great principles upon which this bill is founded. . . . And I may be permitted to say that I believe a majority, and a large majority of this House, is in favour of those three principles. Now, if this be the case, I should naturally have felt surprise at receiving a fierce opposition to the second reading of the bill. With the conviction I have that a majority of the House is in favour of the principles on which this bill is founded, I had a right to count on success on the second reading.

“But we are not permitted to bring the question to that issue. With a majority of this House in favour of the principles upon which this bill is founded, this measure is not to be tried upon its principles; but a resolution is thrust into your hands, which asks the House to commit itself on two points, which are, after all, points of detail which are unquestionably, as I will show, points of detail, and which ought to be considered in committee. What are the two objections to which the amendment of the noble lord refers? I will touch upon one, certainly of the least importance, with regard to what the noble lord calls the disfranchisement of freeholders. Now, I cannot agree that any freeholder is disfranchised by this bill. I think I might, with equal justice, say that the bill provides for the enfranchisement of freeholders; but for the sake of discussion I will take the statement of the noble lord. But is this the first bill to amend the representation of the people in which there has been a measure of disfranchisement? The noble lord has had great experience in reform bills; will he refer me to any bill with which he was

ever connected in which there was not a large measure of disfranchisement? Why, in the bill of 1831 and 1832 the whole constituent body of the cities and boroughs of England, amounting in number to nearly 100,000 persons, was partially or completely disfranchised. Why, the noble lord was not content on that occasion to propose the disfranchisement of the whole constituencies of all the cities and towns of the kingdom, but he carried on that occasion, to a great extent, the disfranchisement of the freeholders in the counties. Every freeholder who lived in one of the great towns that then was first summoned to parliament, found, to use the language of the noble lord, that the bill disfranchised him as a freeholder of the county, and he became afterwards a voter for the borough in which he resided only in right of occupation."

Mr. Disraeli then entered upon a full history of the £10 county franchise. He showed how impracticable it would be to propose, as so many in the course of the debate had desired, a £20 occupation franchise for counties. Previous governments had opposed the reduction of the occupation franchise in counties to £10, and had proposed a £20 occupation franchise for counties. With what result? They had failed, and had been defeated. Warned by this lesson the coalition cabinet in 1854 had therefore proposed, in their "large and comprehensive measure of parliamentary reform," to establish in the counties a £10 occupation franchise.

"Now, who were the men," cried Mr. Disraeli, "who recommended in 1854 this principle of a £10 occupation franchise? Why, sir, among these counsellors were many of the most distinguished members of this House. The noble lord was, of course, there, and was the organ of the government by whom the measure was brought forward. There was the right hon. baronet the member for Carlisle (Sir James Graham). There was also the noble Viscount the member for Tiverton (Viscount Palmerston). There were also,

as members of that cabinet, the right hon. gentleman the member for Wiltshire (Mr. Sidney Herbert) and the right hon. gentleman the member for the University of Oxford (Mr. Gladstone). Are we to suppose—considering all the circumstances under which these distinguished members of the cabinet acted—that they were trifling with this important subject? Can we believe for a moment that they would have given their assent to that proposition unless they had bestowed their most serious attention to the subject, with a due sense of the responsibility they had undertaken? We know now—for the matter is no secret, I can refer to it without difficulty—we know, I say, that there was discord and dissension in the cabinet upon this subject of reform. That cabinet was also so unfortunate upon it as to lose a colleague; though more fortunate than ours, that colleague returned to them. The retirement of the noble viscount the member for Tiverton, in the autumn, proved that the decision at which the cabinet had arrived was not hastily formed, but that it was a question which they had considered with much pains, and with the fullest sense of their duty. Now, I ask, did the noble viscount quit the cabinet on account of the £10 franchise? If so, he must, by his returning back to the cabinet, have been fully convinced by the arguments of his colleagues. If the noble viscount quitted the cabinet on account of the £10 franchise proposed, why did not his distinguished colleagues who shared his opinions follow his example? Yet, sir, to my surprise, it is from the lips of those gentlemen I now hear that the solution of all these difficulties is to be found in the proposition, acceptable they say to the majority, of a £20 franchise for counties."

Mr. Disraeli next proceeded to prove how unpopular had been the £20 franchise, and how Lord Palmerston had nearly escaped defeat when advocating it. "What," he asked, "would be our position if we had



proposed a £20 franchise? I can tell you in a moment what it would be. The struggle that is now taking place would have taken place on that point, and I think with much greater advantage to the noble lord, because then he would have been the champion of the House of Commons, whose deliberate and recorded opinions would have been outraged by our proposition; and no doubt the noble lord would have carried his views against the government. What would be our position had we followed the noble lord's present advice, so contrary to his former policy, and now even smiled at with demureness by the hon. member for Birmingham? Our position would have been this—had we proposed a £20 franchise for counties and a £6 for boroughs, we should have been obliged to commence our labours in committee, had we ever got there, with a £10 franchise for counties and a £6 for boroughs."

Mr. Disraeli then touched upon the accusation that he had omitted the interests of the working classes in his measure. His bill was not democratic enough. He evidently was afraid of the people. "What are the people?" he exclaimed, "and why should I fear? Why, sir, I have no apprehension myself that, if you had manhood suffrage to-morrow, the honest, brave, and good-natured people of England would resort to pillage, incendiarism, and massacre. Who expects that? But though I would do as much justice to the qualities of our countrymen as any gentleman in this House—though I may not indulge in high-flown and far-fetched expressions with respect to them like those we have listened to, *for the people may have their parasites as well as monarchs and aristocracies*—yet I have no doubt that, whatever may be their high qualities, our countrymen are subject to the same political laws that affect the condition of all other communities and nations. If you establish a democracy you must in due season reap the fruits of a democracy.

You will in due season have great impatience of the public burdens combined in due season with great increase of the public expenditure. You will in due season reap the fruits of such united influence. You will in due season have wars entered into from passion and not from reason; and you will in due season submit to peace ignominiously sought and ignominiously obtained, which will diminish your authority and perhaps endanger your independence. You will in due season, with a democracy, find that your property is less valuable, and that your freedom is less complete. I doubt not when there has been realized a sufficient quantity of disaffection and dismay, the good sense of this country will come to the rally, and that you will obtain some remedy for your grievances and some redress for your wrongs, by the process through which alone it can be obtained—by that process which may render your property more secure, but which will not render your liberty more eminent. I know that I shall be told that these are old-fashioned notions. The hon. member for Birmingham has said the same on the platform, which he is always praising and certainly adorns; he will point to the instance of the United States of America, and say, 'This shows how completely erroneous are the notions entertained in Europe of democracy.' But I say, between Europe and the United States there is no sort of analogy. I say the United States of America are colonies; for a country, though independent, does not cease to be a colony; and they are not only colonies, but they are absolutely colonizing, and none of the conditions obtain in them which regulate the social system of the ancient communities of this quarter of the globe. That being my opinion, I cannot look upon what is called reduction of the franchise in boroughs but with alarm; and I have never yet met any argument which fairly encounters the objections that are urged to it. You cannot encounter it by sentimental assertions of the good

qualities of the working classes. The greater their good qualities the greater the danger. If you lay down as a principle that they are to enter the constituent body, not as individuals, but as a multitude, they must be the predominant class from their number; and if you dwell on their intelligence, you only increase the power they will exercise."

But was it true, he asked, that he had excluded the working classes? He had inserted in his bill a variety of franchises which would introduce numerous classes into the constituency with different pursuits and with different interests, and he felt that by the establishment of the same occupation-franchise in counties and in boroughs he would prevent the introduction of the mere multitude, which, if once he began the reduction of the borough franchise, would ultimately and speedily be accomplished, and at the same time supply means by which the most intelligent and the most meritorious of the working classes could enter into the great national constituent body. Was the policy not sound? Was it not a wise and effective policy? To that policy three objections had been urged in debate. Lord John Russell objected to it, because he was against what he called "uniformity of franchise"—a phrase that had never escaped his (Mr. Disraeli's) lips. Yet Lord John had used that phrase with respect to a measure containing the greatest variety of franchises ever included in a reform bill! Personal property, for the first time, was completely admitted as a qualification for the electoral privilege. There was scarcely a class and scarcely a species of property which was not considered in that unprecedented variety of franchises; and still Lord John rose to say, "I oppose the bill because I object to a uniformity of franchise!" Then the noble lord was against uniformity of franchise in counties and boroughs. But how had the noble lord dealt with that matter? He had spoken throughout the debate as if it was an innovation unknown and unprecedented

in our political annals. "It is unconstitutional; it is noxious; it is pernicious; it is unjust;" and for that reason he opposed the bill in his speeches—and yet he never referred to the point in his resolution. There was nothing in Lord John's resolution against the uniformity or identity of franchise, because they might reduce or extend the franchise, and yet might preserve uniformity; but in his speeches the noble lord was extremely vehement against that unheard-of, that unconstitutional system. "What," asked the chancellor of the exchequer, "has the noble lord himself done on this subject? What was the course pursued by the noble lord, the advocate *κατ' ἐξοχήν* of parliamentary reform? The noble lord, as a member of Lord Aberdeen's government, as the principal organ of the government by whom that mature plan of reform was introduced, proposed on that occasion five new franchises, with the consent of the right hon. members for Wiltshire, Carlisle, and the University of Oxford, and also with the consent of the noble viscount the member for Tiverton. He proposed five new franchises, and at the same time that they should be alike extended to counties and boroughs. So much for identity and uniformity! The noble lord failed for the moment in his praiseworthy attempt; but that was a policy which announced that the noble lord was in favour of identity of suffrage in county and town; in favour of a great variety of franchises, and that they should be enjoyed equally by borough and by county. The noble lord was extremely disappointed by the failure of his second bill for parliamentary reform, and he made an announcement in this House, which I well recollect—that he was convinced the time had gone by when, on subjects of reform, what are called general and comprehensive measures could be passed; and he therefore intended to devote himself in future to the support of the measure introduced by the hon. member for Surrey (Mr. Locke-King). The



noble lord acted consistently with that declaration, for he has voted invariably in favour of that motion, which establishes an identity between the borough and the county suffrage. So, therefore, in the proposal for five franchises, which by accident failed, and in the systematic policy that he has pursued since, the noble lord has exhibited a consistent determination to support that very principle of identity or uniformity (as he erroneously calls it) of suffrage, which now he denounces as an unheard-of innovation."

After maintaining that the working classes would, under his bill, be admitted in a manner which would be satisfactory to them when brought into operation, and in a fashion consistent with the principles of the constitution, Mr. Disraeli indulged in a personal attack upon Lord John Russell, and at the same time contended that the policy of the government had been beneficial to the country. "Sir, I must now say one word in reference to the noble proposer of this amendment. . . . I have no wish, no intention—from the bottom of my heart I say it—to impute any motives to the noble lord unworthy his character or his position. The noble lord may remember that when in 1854, at a moment of great personal distress, he withdrew, not without emotion, his reform bill, and some reproaches and some jeers were not spared him from his own side, I offered to him the unaffected tribute of the personal respect of the gentlemen who then sat opposite to him. I do not think that there is a man who has sat long in this House but must honour the character of the noble lord. I admire that character. I admire his great parliamentary talents. I admire his ambition. Sir, it is not wise in this House to scrutinize with too much severity every act and every word of those who are intrusted with the conduct of the parties in this House. In the fierce struggle of public life, and in the intense competition of this scene, one on whom devolves the lead of a party is called on for such constant action and such prompt

decision that he must indeed be a wise and favoured being who can look back to everything that he has done without regret, and who may not have used words over which memory may mourn. But I am persuaded that neither the noble lord nor any of his friends would desire that in this House there should be any diminution of that free and frank criticism upon the conduct of public men which has always been a part, and not the least valuable part, of our parliamentary life and manners. Therefore, I am sure that the noble lord will not feel offended with me if I tell him, that I think there is one quality in his character which has rather marred than made his fortunes. It is a restlessness which will not brook that delay and that patience needed in our constitutional government for the conduct of public affairs. The moment that the noble lord is not in power, he appears to me to live in an atmosphere of coalitions, combinations, *coups d'état*, and cunning resolutions. An Appropriation Clause may happen to every man once in his life. But there is only one man living of whom it can be said that in 1835 he overthrew the government of Sir Robert Peel upon an impracticable pretext; that in 1852 he overthrew the government of Lord Derby with an objectless coalition; that in 1855 he overthrew the government of Lord Aberdeen by a personal *coup d'état*; and that in 1857 he overthrew the government of the noble lord the member for Tiverton by a parliamentary manœuvre.

"Now, sir, I beg the noble lord at this moment to throw the vision of his memory for an instant back to the year 1852. He sat before me then, the head of a mighty host. He drew the fatal arrow that was to destroy our government. He succeeded. He destroyed in breathless haste the government of Lord Derby; but did he destroy nothing else? Did he not destroy also the position of a great statesman? Did he not destroy almost the great historic party of which he was once the proud and honoured chief? The noble lord

does not sit opposite me now; but had he not hurried the catastrophe of 1852, and had he bided his time, according to the periodic habit of our constitution, he would have returned to these benches the head of that great party of which he was once the chief and proudest ornament. What has the noble lord done now, and what is the moment that he has chosen for this party attack—an attack which was not necessary to the vindication of his policy, or for the assertion of those principles which I believe he sincerely holds? I brought forward on the part of the government a measure, founded on approved principles, for which fair play and custom would have insured a second reading. The discussion on the questions which the noble lord has thrust, as it were, into the Speaker's hand would, in the due course of parliamentary routine, have been postponed yet for some time. But what is the moment which the noble lord has chosen to precipitate this struggle? A moment the most critical in the affairs of this country and of Europe for many years past. The noble lord well knows that some weeks ago I came down to the table of this House, and informed the House that important negotiations were going on. The noble lord has other means of information besides those supplied to this House. The noble lord, I doubt not, is well informed of the present state of public affairs, and he could not have been unmindful of them in the introductory address to his resolution, although that resolution related only to a domestic subject; for the noble lord could even that night think fit to cast a sneer at the individual to whom is intrusted at this moment the most awful responsibility that ever fell to the lot of a minister. At a moment when it was of vital importance that the authority of the government should not be interfered with or embarrassed—at a moment, too, of all others, and of all men, when the minister for foreign affairs should not be held up to public distrust—the noble lord chooses that moment for a

party attack and for a personal sneer.\* I should not be acting with frankness and fairness to the House, if I concealed the fact that the conduct of the noble lord has been most embarrassing to the government. I declare it on my responsibility as a minister that the conduct of the noble lord has produced injurious effects on the public service.

"But, sir, I have such confidence in the integrity of our allies—I have such confidence in the energy and resources of that colleague against whom the noble lord directed this sneer—I have such confidence, above all, in the patriotism of the House of Commons, that I believe the division of to-night will confound the calculations and the combinations of the noble lord, and will assist, and perhaps insure, the peace of Europe. The noble lord—who on these occasions is always in the habit of introducing the question of dissolution—told me the other night that he was ready for the hustings, and that he should brandish upon them the bill that I had introduced. In the office over which it is my honour to preside I have often an opportunity of meeting some of the principal constituents of the noble lord—great merchants and eminent bankers of this metropolis; men of different opinions, agreeing in nothing else but in their readiness at all times to assist the administration of this country. I am indebted as much as my predecessors undoubtedly were to their wise counsel and their zealous aid; but I can tell the noble lord that, when they come to my office, it is not parliamentary reform that they speak about, it is not financial interests that most concern them, but what they say is, 'Peace!—let the government give us peace; it is the only thing that we require. Our energies are depressed, our commerce circumscribed, and our enterprise crippled; but let the government secure for us peace, and then

\* Lord John Russell had sneered at its having been said that the presence of Lord Malmesbury at the Foreign Office was a security for peace, and wondered who could be duped by such an assertion.





they will be entitled to the gratitude and confidence of their country.' I thought, sir, we had secured peace—I thought the time had arrived when I might have come down to this House and told them that the dark disquietude that for three months has overshadowed Europe had passed away—had been succeeded by serenity and repose. But for this untoward, this unhappy motion of the noble lord, that might have been. And I tell the noble lord that when he goes to the hustings of which he talks, and brandishes this bill, he will find the minds of his constituents full of another matter, and that they will demand from him the reasons for the course he has adopted."

He then defended the policy the government had pursued:—

"Sir, it is something more than a year ago that Her Majesty summoned Lord Derby to her councils. Lord Derby then, as on all other occasions, expressed to Her Majesty his readiness, as a last resource, to serve his sovereign; but he also felt it his duty then to explain to the queen that his position in the House of Commons had been much weakened by the last general election, and that he could not count in the following of his friends on more, probably, than one-third of the members of this House; and, sir, under these circumstances Lord Derby humbly submitted to Her Majesty his wish that Her Majesty would reconsider her intention, and deign to pause before Her Majesty commanded him to undertake so difficult a task. The queen was graciously pleased to act on that suggestion, and Her Majesty did reconsider her intention. Her Majesty surveyed the condition of her kingdom and of her empire with that comprehensive and perfectly impartial spirit, which all who have served Her Majesty know that she ever exercises. And it was under these circumstances, having reconsidered the position of public affairs, that Her Majesty deigned to signify to Lord Derby that she deemed it was his duty to undertake the responsibility of their management

"Sir, we have endeavoured, in pursuance of the command of our sovereign, to administer the affairs of this mighty empire. That we have done so sedulously I presume to say; that we have conducted them not altogether without success I venture to believe. I know, sir, that when we acceded to office there was a great fear in the public mind that this country was not defended as became England; but we now know, sir, that the name of England carries due authority abroad, and that she can add to negotiation all that influence that results from the consciousness of power. I know that when we acceded to office there was great distress and depression in men's minds—a fear of increased taxation impending, and disappointment from the suspicion that engagements for the reduction of taxation would not be fulfilled. But, sir, the burdens on the public have not been increased, and the promises of reduction have been realized; and the state of our revenue is, in every sense, highly satisfactory. With regard to the more important branch of foreign affairs, I can say truly that although in that respect we had an inheritance of trouble, and probably during the period of our official existence we have had as many difficulties to deal with as could well fall to the lot of any ministry, although during the last three months the question of peace or war has sometimes appeared to tremble in the balance and to be only a matter of a moment, still we have so managed affairs that all immediate dangers appear to have vanished. There is now a prospect of arrangement, which, if concluded, will lead to the establishment of undoubted and enduring peace.

"I touch, sir, on principal topics; doubtless there are others, and of importance, but I will not dilate on them now. We have, I think, introduced measures calculated to make law reform not merely a mockery and a by-word. If we are indebted for the pacification of India to the wisdom of our rulers and the valour of our chiefs, at least it must be acknowledged that this adminis-



tration did support and promote the success and heroism of those men by sending out to them, under great stress and difficulties, those supplies of valiant soldiers and those munitions that led to the triumphs they achieved. The noble lord has talked, as he always talks, of a dissolution of the present parliament. These are words that cannot escape my lips, and I must, with the permission of the House, refrain from touching upon that theme; but I may be allowed to say, in answer to the noble lord, that if in the course of time the present servants of the queen find themselves upon the hustings before their constituents, I for one have that confidence in a great and generous nation that I believe that in that eventful hour they will not forget the difficulties under which we undertook the administration of affairs, nor perhaps, sir, be altogether unmindful of what, under those difficulties, we have accomplished for their welfare. It is the conviction we entertain of the justice of the people of England—it is because we believe in the power of public opinion—that we have been sustained in this House during our long and anxious struggle, and are still sustained, even at this moment, amid all the manoeuvres of parliamentary intrigue and all the machinations of party warfare.”

At the conclusion of the speech the House divided, and amid great excitement, for the result had been by no means assured, ministers found themselves in a minority; for the second reading of the bill 291, against it, 330—majority, 39. Thus it will be seen that the almost unequalled number of 621 members was present and voted on this division.

Of the two courses before them, ministers preferred the dissolution of parliament to the resignation of their offices. The grounds on which the government appealed to the country were well stated by Mr. Disraeli in the address he issued to his constituents:—

“GENTLEMEN—A parliamentary majority, composed of discordant sections, has availed itself of its numerical strength to embarrass Her Majesty’s

government, and by a disingenuous manoeuvre, to intercept the discussion of their measures.

“A year ago Lord Derby was summoned by Her Majesty to undertake the administration of public affairs. Assisted by his colleagues, he has with diligence and devotion endeavoured to discharge his duty to the country.

“The blow which has lately been inflicted on the government deprives it of authority; and yet in the ranks of the Opposition there is no more unity of sentiment than when their distracted politics rendered it necessary that Lord Derby should assume the helm.

“The Opposition in the present House of Commons, which was elected under ambiguous circumstances, is broken into sections, which can always combine and overthrow the queen’s government, however formed. This is a condition alike prejudicial to parliament and to the empire.

“It is for the country to comprehend and to remedy these evils.

“The moment is critical. England has engaged to mediate between two great monarchs, and if possible, preserve for Europe the blessings of peace. It is necessary that the queen’s government should be supported by a patriotic parliament.

“Her Majesty, therefore, under the advice of her ministers, will shortly prorogue the present parliament with a view to its immediate dissolution, and will recur to the sense of her people, so that those who may be intrusted with Her Majesty’s confidence may be enabled to conduct the government with becoming authority.

“I have the honour to be, gentlemen,

“Your obliged and faithful servant,

“B. DISRAELI

“DOWNING STREET, April 4, 1859.”

Parliament was prorogued April 19, 1859, and dissolved on the following day.

The state of foreign affairs to a certain extent favoured the fortunes of the Conservative party at the hustings. War had now broken out between France and Austria concerning the cause of Italian independence. Ever since the disastrous events of 1848–49, terminating in the battle of Novara fatal to the Sardinians, the relations between Piedmont and Austria had been of an unfriendly character; and the undisguised sympathy professed by the government of Victor Emanuel for the cause of Italian independence in the north of Italy, or in other words, the throwing off of the Austrian yoke, at last led to the withdrawal

deen, Lord Clarendon, Lord Palmerston, and Lord John Russell—the cabinet of “all the talents”—failed in negotiation? Yet that cabinet had possessed every advantage; it was filled by experienced statesmen, it had a parliamentary majority, and it had a patriotic Opposition. “You had,” sneered Mr. Disraeli, “an Opposition numerous and fairly ambitious; but in the midst of your negotiations that Opposition did not bring forward votes of want of confidence, nor propose cunning resolutions to embarrass the public service. We aided you in your difficulties, and supported you heartily and truly. Is there any one can murmur ‘No’? I defy any man to bring an instance during that war in which we brought forward a single motion to embarrass you; and when by your general misgovernment and misconduct of the war there arose a public outcry which called for your fall, it was a member on your own side of the House who struck the blow, and it was by the votes of several members of the Liberal party that you were ejected from office. . . . I hardly know who are our rivals; still less do I know who are to be our successors. If it is the noble lord (Lord Palmerston) and his friends, I might contrast his policy with ours, his failures with ours, and make out a case upon which the House might adjudicate. But then the noble lord—who lives not in the good old days of constitutional rivalry, but in the days of reconciled sections—will tell the House, ‘You cannot judge of my resources by the gentlemen who are sitting near me; others will come to my aid, and by their unquestioned abilities and their varied experience, and with the bright evidence of their triumphant careers, I shall form an administration which will put you out as the glorious sun does a farthing rushlight, and the whole country will immediately see that they have a strong government entitled to their confidence.’”

The next charge against the government, proceeded the chancellor of the

exchequer, was that because they had failed in the question of parliamentary reform, therefore they were not entitled to deal again with the subject, which they undoubtedly would do if continued in office. This gave Mr. Disraeli an opportunity of launching forth against Lord John Russell, who sat, all smiles, below the gangway.

“There were great objections,” said Mr. Disraeli alluding to his bill, “to details, but still details no doubt of importance, urged against that measure. It was said, for instance, that it would disfranchise county freeholders living in towns, that it would enable votes to be given by papers, and other objections were made to it. Admitting, for the sake of argument, that these propositions perfectly deserved the condemnation they received, have no propositions to amend the representation of the people been coupled and connected with propositions which were equally unsuccessful and equally condemned? Why don’t we hear of them? Why are we always told of our unhappy proposal to disfranchise freeholders and to give votes by papers? The noble lord the member for the city has been in office almost all his life; he has had a monopoly of this question of reform; he has been handling it and fumbling it as long as I can remember. What, then, has he done? He has twice brought forward reform bills, and twice unsuccessfully. He proposed at one time—he, the great patron of the working classes—to disfranchise all the freemen in England. Why should not that proposition be urged as a reason for no longer intrusting him with the preparation of a reform bill? In one bill he introduced a proposition hostile to the very principle on which representative government is founded, and alien to the spirit of the constitution—representation by minorities. If there ever was a proposition received with universal condemnation, that was it. Why should not that disqualify the noble lord from meddling again with the sacred



question of reform? The noble lord, who cannot for a moment tolerate government by a minority, within my memory sat on these benches, and led this House as prime minister, in an avowed minority, resting entirely on the counsel and the support which he received from Sir R. Peel.\* The noble lord, who is so constant in his denunciations of government by a minority, himself proposed to change the English constitution, and give representation to minorities at the hustings. I suppose he is the only person who can be intrusted with the preparation of a reform bill, because the other noble lord, the member for Tiverton, does not like the subject at all. It is one to which he does not conceal his disinclination. We, who at least have prepared and introduced a measure which would more than have doubled the constituency of the kingdom, are never to be allowed to give our opinions on a measure of this kind, while the noble lord, who scarcely conceals his opinion that all parliamentary reform is a bad thing, and who tells you that if you are to have it you shall have as little as possible, is the popular candidate for the command of what we were told yesterday are now 'the united sections of the Liberal party.' I congratulate the honourable member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright) on the lamb-like manner in which he abdicated those portentous opinions which a while ago frightened the island from its propriety."

The debate lasted three nights, though Mr. Disraeli was anxious for the House to divide on the first night. It was not till the 10th of June that members went into the lobby, and gave their names to the clerks. On a division the numbers were 323 for the amendment, 310 against it; majority for the government, 13.

Upon this defeat the Conservatives resigned. On the failure of Lord Granville to form an administration owing to the refusal of Lord John Russell to serve under

him, Lord Palmerston was sent for by Her Majesty, and the following government was framed. We give only its more prominent members :—

First Lord of the Treasury, .	Viscount Palmerston.
Lord Chancellor, . . . .	Lord Campbell.
Lord President of the Council,	Earl Granville.
Lord Privy Seal, . . . .	Duke of Argyle.
Chancellor of the Exchequer, {	Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone.
Home Secretary, . . . .	Sir G. C. Lewis.
Foreign Secretary, . . . .	Lord J. Russell.
Colonial Secretary, . . . .	Duke of Newcastle.
War Secretary, . . . . {	Right Hon. Sidney Herbert.
Indian Secretary, . . . .	Sir C. Wood.
Chancellor of the Duchy of {	Sir G. Grey.
Lancaster, . . . .	
Postmaster-General, . . . .	Earl of Elgin.
First Lord of the Admiralty,	Duke of Somerset.
Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland,	Earl of Carlisle.
Chief Secretary for Ireland,	Mr. Cardwell.

The Board of Trade was offered to Mr. Cobden, but declined; upon his refusal the post was filled by Mr. Milner Gibson. It is worthy of notice that between the June of 1846 and the July of 1859 no less than six changes of ministry had occurred.

Mr. Disraeli was not one of those leaders who, in the hour of defeat, abandon all hopes of future success, and by placidly resigning themselves to failure damp the ardour of their followers. He still believed in the fortunes of the Conservative party, and if that party were only patient and united a great future, he declared, was open before them. Speaking at a dinner given to the late ministry at Merchant Taylors' Hall he alluded to the subject. Since the reform bill the Tory leaders had been four times recalled to office; and though their rule had been brief, Conservatism had gained in sympathy and influence throughout the country. "The Conservative party," said Mr. Disraeli (July 16, 1859), "is now a great confederation, prepared to assist progress and to resist revolution. We have arrived at this commanding position at the very moment when it has devolved upon us to abandon power; but there is no inconsistency in the situation if we examine

\* See the history of the Russell government, formed in 1846, as stated in this work.

the past. We have seceded from office because of the powerful machinery which was devised in 1832 to prevent us from gaining office, but we did so unquestionably with public respect. We relinquished office with the confidence and approbation of the country. That is capable of satisfactory demonstration, and this is the proof—that those who ejected us from power have laid down no good ground why that expulsion should have taken place. . . . We must remember that when we have to deal with the constitution of an old European country, we are not like men who fashion commonwealths in a wilderness. We have to consider prescriptive rights, habitual influences, and all that complication of opinion, sentiment, and prejudice which exists and can exist only in a community whose institutions are consecrated by custom. It is this reverence for tradition which makes this ancient and free country in which we live shrink from empirical and unnecessary change, and which makes our statesmen hesitate to alter even to improve. . . . I can truly say that, from the earliest moment when I gave my attention to public affairs, I have ever had it as one of my main objects to restore the power and repute of the great party to which we are proud to belong, and which I believe to be intimately bound up with the welfare and renown of this country. My connection with that party has existed in days of trial and comparative adversity, but I have never ceased to have faith in its destinies, because I believed it was founded on principles to which the great body of the nation responded. In attempting, however humbly, to regulate its fortunes, I have always striven to distinguish that which was eternal from that which was but accidental in its opinions. I have always striven to assist in building it upon a broad and national basis, because I believed it to be a party peculiarly and essentially national—a party which adhered to the institutions of the country as embodying the national necessities and forming the best security for the

liberty, the power, and the prosperity of England.”

The history of the remainder of this session can be briefly sketched. The Liberals were divided among themselves, and they had no policy. In domestic matters they promised reform, but it was known that Lord Palmerston was not eager for the settlement of the question; and in foreign affairs the prime minister had openly stated, “The course which we intend to pursue is that which has been chalked out for us by those who preceded us—a strict neutrality in the contest which is now waging.” Happily the contest was not of long duration. Austria worsted throughout—at Montebello, at Palestro, at Magenta, at Marignano, and at Solferino—was only too pleased to come to terms with her adversaries and to agree to the preliminaries of peace signed at Villafranca. The terms of this treaty, afterwards extended and confirmed at Zurich, were as follows:—The Emperor of Austria and the Emperor of the French were to favour the creation of an Italian confederation, which was to be under the honorary presidency of the Pope. Austria was to cede to France her rights over Lombardy, with the exception of the fortresses of Mantua and Peschiera. The ceded territory was to be presented to Sardinia. Venetia was to form part of the Italian confederation, remaining, however, subject to Austria. The Grand-duke of Tuscany and the Duke of Modena were to return to their states. Both France and Austria were to request the Holy Father to introduce into his states some indispensable reform; and complete amnesty was to be granted to all persons compromised on the occasion of the recent events in the territories of the belligerents. France subsequently had her reward in the annexation of Savoy and Nice.

Throughout this session Mr. Disraeli was a vigilant critic of the actions of the government, and the voice of the leader of the Opposition made itself frequently heard in the popular chamber. Mr. Gladstone introduced his budget (July 18, 1859), and the



financial statement gave rise to the usual amount of adverse and favourable comments. The chancellor of the exchequer estimated the revenue for the coming year at £64,340,000, and the expenditure at £69,207,000; for the army the expense would be £13,300,000, and for the navy, £12,782,000. The deficiency of £4,867,000 he proposed to make up by adding 4*d.* to the tax on incomes above £150, which would produce £4,000,000 (the whole amount to be exacted on the payment of the first half year), and diminishing the malt credits from eighteen to twelve weeks, which would give £780,000. Maltsters had hitherto been allowed to take credit of eighteen weeks in the payment of their excise duty; thus, by this plan a considerable portion of the revenue of 1860-61 was brought into the treasury before the end of the financial year 1859-60. To this arrangement Mr. Disraeli made some objections.

After a careful defence of his own financial arrangements, the leader of the Opposition expressed it as his opinion that Mr. Gladstone was right in increasing the income tax rather than to resort to borrowing; he, however, objected to the mode of collecting the additional income tax, and insisted that the levy of the special tax in six months instead of a year would be a great injury. All the desired results could be obtained by spreading the collection over a year, and obtaining the accommodation required from the bank. Still the country could not go on raising £70,000,000 a year, and it was most necessary to enforce economy. They could not reduce the three great sources of civil expenditure—the administration of justice, the education, and the health of the people; to make war upon those estimates was really to make war upon civilization. They must reduce their naval and military estimates in common with other powers. The moment had arrived to introduce into Europe the question of economy. The treaty of Villafranca had been signed, and there was a talk of a congress or a conference

to be attended by the neutral powers. He advised England to stay away from the conference, for she had been neutral throughout the late struggle; but the moment she attended the conference she would cease to be neutral, and might be led into engagements which would involve her in proceedings injurious to her resources and certain to produce only ruin and confusion. He advised her instead to appeal to the Emperor of the French.

“Do not go to congresses and conferences,” he said, “in fine dresses and ribands, to enjoy the petty vanity of settling the fate of petty princes. No; but go to your ally the Emperor of the French; give him credit for the motives which have animated and influenced him, and say, ‘If you are in favour of peace—if at a great hazard to the mere reputation of the hour you have terminated this war, join with us in securing that peace by the only mode in which peace can be secured. Revive and restore, and even increase the good feeling which once existed, which I hope still exists, between the great countries of England and France; prove by the diminution of your armaments that you are sincerely anxious, as we believe you are, for the peace of Europe and of the world, and we will join you in a spirit of reciprocal confidence, and animating alike the industry of both nations, thus achieve conquests far more valuable than Lombardy, far more valuable than those wild dreams of a regeneration ever promised, but never accomplished.’ . . . Instead of going to congresses and conferences for petty objects in which England has no interest, and which may involve England in great disaster, let the noble lord at the head of the government prove to the world that England is a power that possesses and exercises a great influence, especially with France, by accomplishing that which is much more important than formal articles of peace; by bringing about that which will put an end for ever to the doubts on the sincerity of princes; which will speak to every cabin

and cottage in both countries, as well as to the houses of parliament and places of high resort; which will prove to the natural conviction of the great countries of Europe that peace is the policy of their rulers. Let us terminate this disastrous system of rival expenditure and mutually agree, with no hypocrisy, but in a manner and under circumstances that can admit of no doubt—by a reduction of armaments—that peace is really our policy. Then, sir, the right hon. gentleman the chancellor of the exchequer may look forward with no apprehension to his next budget, and England may then actually witness the termination of the income tax.”

A few evenings after he had expressed these opinions Mr. Disraeli again alluded to the subject. It was proposed that an English representative should be sent to the conference at Zurich, to consider the terms of the Villafranca treaty. Mr. Disraeli strongly objected to such a proceeding. “If under all circumstances,” he said, “we should be chary about the engagements which conferences and congresses always lead to, surely when a war has been waged of which we entirely disapproved, when it has been closed on a sudden, when the responsibility of all that has occurred and of all that may occur is one of which this government is completely clear, it would be the height of rashness and precipitation by any act or any advice of ours to involve ourselves in the responsibility of a settlement occasioned by a war for which we are not answerable. I trust, therefore, that the feeling of the House will be so direct and distinct upon this subject, that Her Majesty’s ministers will not feel it their duty to recommend Her Majesty to send any representative to this projected conference. . . . We had nothing to do with the war; we had nothing to do with the peace; and if difficulties arise in which we must interfere, we shall interfere with much greater effect and with much greater dignity, if we do not do so merely to save other persons from difficulties which they created and for which we are not answerable.”

Parliament was prorogued August 13, 1859, and ministers had not then made up their minds whether they should attend the peace conference or no. In the speech from the throne the lord chancellor said, “Her Majesty has not yet received the information necessary to enable her to decide whether she may think fit to take part in any such negotiation.”

During the autumn, and until the opening of parliament, Mr. Disraeli was silent, save on local matters devoid of political interest.

The Palmerston programme at the assembling of the legislature was, as usual, a full and ambitious one. The government had decided to send a representative to attend the congress at Zurich. A commercial treaty had been entered into between England and France; war in conjunction with France was being waged with China, to redress the infractions of the treaty of Tien Tsin; a treaty had been concluded with Japan; the volunteer system was to be encouraged; a reform bill was to be introduced, and measures were to be considered for the improvement of the laws relating to bankruptcy and the transfer of land; also for the consolidation of the statutes, and a further fusion of law and equity. Mr. Disraeli reviewed the position of affairs in his speech on the address (January 4, 1860). The first topic which engaged his attention was the commercial treaty with France, which Mr. Cobden had conducted to a successful issue. He wished to know, said the leader of the Opposition, what was to be their business as a House of Commons in examining that commercial treaty. Were they to be called upon to decide whether the terms of the bargain were advantageous or adequate? If they did that, they must admit that the principle of reciprocity was the principle which to guide them in their decision. But to admit the principle of reciprocity was to shake to its centre the new commercial system which had of late years been established in the country. If the



principle of reciprocity was not to be acknowledged in the present instance, he wanted to know why they should not have increased their commercial relations with France, without at the same time asking an equivalent? It was said the country was indebted for the prospect of increased commercial relations with France to Mr. Cobden; but he felt sure that Mr. Cobden was the last person who would ever have counselled the adoption of a commercial treaty founded on the principle of reciprocity. There had been no necessity for the treaty, for the Emperor of the French had declared four years ago that it was his intention in 1861 to abolish the prohibitive system.\*

"What then," asked Mr. Disraeli, "is it you expect to gain by a treaty? All you can do to encourage an increased commercial exchange with France, you can do

at once by reducing your own duties, without placing on this table a document you may find very awkward and embarrassing hereafter, and raising claims for reciprocity from other quarters opposed to the commercial system you have now so long and so successfully been carrying into practice. On these two points I think the House has a right to ask some explanations from Her Majesty's government; we have a right to ask why they have negotiated a treaty with France on the principle of reciprocity, which has been absolutely rejected in our own commercial system? Why have they ostensibly endeavoured to obtain a result which must have inevitably occurred at the very period the treaty stipulates for? Why have they engaged us by treaty for what must have been done without any treaty whatever? These are points, in my opinion, which call for explanation."

\* The commercial treaty was an arrangement between the Emperor of the French and Mr. Cobden. France was and, as we have recently seen, is in favour of protection. The Emperor Napoleon was a free-trader, and signed the agreement by his own imperial will, and not by the sanction of the nation. Now that France has no emperor, she is anxious to discontinue the treaty, and to adopt a stringent policy of protection. The commercial treaty was signed Jan. 23, 1860. The two most important clauses are the first and the fifth.

I. His Majesty the Emperor of the French engages that on the following articles of British production and manufacture, imported from the United Kingdom into France, the duties shall in no case exceed thirty per cent. *ad valorem*, the two additional decimes included. The articles are as follows:—

Refined sugar; turmeric in powder; rock crystal worked; iron forged in lumps or prisms; brass wire (copper alloyed with zinc), polished or unpolished, of every description; chemical productions, enumerated or non-enumerated; extracts of dye-woods; garancine; common soap of every description, and perfumed soap; stone-ware and earthen-ware, fine and common; china and porcelain ware; glass, crystal, mirrors, and plate-glass; cotton yarn; worsted and woollen yarn of every description; yarns of flax and hemp; yarns of hair, enumerated or non-enumerated; cotton manufactures; horse-hair manufactures, enumerated or non-enumerated; worsted and woollen manufactures, enumerated or non-enumerated; cloth list; manufactures of hair; silk manufactures; manufactures of waste and floss silk; manufactures of bark and all other vegetable fibres, enumerated or non-enumerated; manufactures of flax and hemp; mixed manufactures of every description; hosiery, haberdashery, and small wares; manufactures of caoutchouc and gutta-percha, pure or mixed; articles of clothing, wholly or in part made up; prepared skins; articles of every sort manufactured from leather or skins, included or not under the denomination of small wares, fine or common; plated articles of every description; cutlery; metal wares, whether enumerated or not; pig and cast iron of every description, without distinction of weight; bar and wrought iron, with the exception of certain kinds; steel; machinery, tools, and mechanical instruments of every description; carriages on springs, lined

and painted; cabinet ware, carved work, and turnery of every description; worked ivory and wood; brandies and spirits, including those not distilled from wine, cherries, molasses, or rice; ships and boats. With respect to refined sugar and chemical productions of which salt is the basis, the excise of inland duties shall be added to the amount of the above specified duties.

V. Her Britannic Majesty engages to recommend to parliament to enable her to abolish the duties of importation on the following articles:—

Sulphuric acid, and other mineral acids; agates and carnelians, set; lucifers of every description; percussion caps; arms of every description; jewels, set; toys; corks; brocade of gold and silver; embroideries and needlework of every description; brass and bronze manufactures, and bronzed metal; canes, walking-canes or sticks, umbrellas or parasol sticks, mounted, painted, or otherwise ornamented; hats, of whatever substance they may be made; gloves, stockings, socks, and other articles of cotton or linen, wholly or in part made up; leather manufactures; lace, manufactured of cotton, wool, silk, or linen; manufactures of iron and steel; machinery and mechanical instruments; tools and other instruments; cutlery, and other articles of steel, iron, or cast-iron; fancy ornaments of steel and iron; articles covered with copper by galvanic process; millinery and artificial flowers; raw fruits; gloves, and other leather articles of clothing; manufactures of caoutchouc and gutta-percha; oils; musical instruments; worsted and woollen shawls, plain, printed, or patterned; coverlids, woollen gloves, and other worsted and woollen manufactures not enumerated; handkerchiefs, and other manufactures not enumerated of linen and hemp; perfumery; cabinet ware, carved work, and turnery of every description; clocks, watches, and opera-glasses; manufactures of lead, enumerated or not enumerated; feathers, dressed or not; goats' and other hair manufactures; china and porcelain ware; stone and earthen ware; grapes; sulphate of quinine; salts of morphine; manufactures of silk, or of silk mixed with any other materials, of whatever description they may be.

The remaining clauses may be briefly condensed thus:—Great Britain to propose the reduction of the duties on the importation of French wine to a rate not exceeding 8s. a

Mr. Disraeli, after praising the courage of the troops engaged in the Chinese war, then criticised the condition of Italy and the relations of the English government to that country. He wished to know what had induced the government to attend the congress. The affairs of Italy did not concern English interests, and a policy of non-interference ought to be adopted. The late government had resolved not to meddle with Italian matters, and both the country and the House had approved of their policy. "There is no doubt," said Mr. Disraeli, laying down the foreign policy he afterwards so brilliantly enforced, "that the House was opposed to our going into the congress, and that it was in favour of that policy which is popularly known by the name of the policy of non-interference. I say popularly known by that name, because I do not know any member of this House—either among my colleagues or among those who sit on the other side of the House—who has ever maintained the monstrous proposition that England ought never, under any circumstances, to interfere in the affairs of foreign states. There are conditions under which it may be our imperative duty to interfere. We may clearly interfere in the affairs of foreign countries when the interests or the honour of England are at stake, or when in our opinion the independence of Europe is menaced. But a great responsibility devolves upon that minister who has to decide when those conditions have

arisen, and he who makes a mistake upon that subject; he who involves his country in interference or in war under the idea that the interests or honour of the country are concerned, when neither is substantially involved; he who involves his country in interference or war because he believes the independence of Europe is menaced, when, in fact, the independence of Europe is not in danger—makes, of course, a great, a fatal mistake. The general principle that we ought not to interfere in the affairs of foreign nations, unless there is a clear necessity, and that, generally speaking, it ought to be held a political dogma that the people of other countries should settle their own affairs without the introduction of foreign influence or foreign power, is one which, I think, the House does not only accept, but, I trust, will cordially adhere to. That was the policy which the late government maintained six months ago, when there was some wavering in the faith of that policy, and some person high in authority spoke of the possibility of England being humiliated by not taking what is called a leading part in the settlement of foreign questions. I ask those who then wavered, or who indulged in such observations, to contrast the position of England now, when after six months we still have to acknowledge the blessings of non-interference in the affairs of our neighbours, notwithstanding the efforts which have been made to interfere, and to which I shall presently refer—I ask them to con-

gallon. Merchandise imported from France to be admitted into Great Britain at a rate of duty equal to the excise duty imposed on articles of the same description in the United Kingdom. Brandies and spirits imported from France to be admitted into the United Kingdom at a duty equal to the excise duty levied on home-made spirits, with the addition of a surtax of 2d. a gallon. Rum and tafia imported from the French colonies to be also admitted at the same rate of duty as levied on the same articles imported from the British colonies. Gold and silver plate imported from France to be admitted at a duty equal to the excise duty charged on British gold and silver plate. Should either of the contracting parties establish an excise duty or inland tax upon any article of home production comprised among the preceding articles, the foreign imported article of the same description to be liable to an equivalent duty on importation. Neither of the contracting parties to prohibit the exportation of coal or to levy duty upon such exportation. The rights of property in trade marks and in patterns of every description to be reciprocally enjoyed by the subjects of either nation in the

dominions of the other. The *ad valorem* duties to be afterwards converted into specific duties by a supplementary convention. (This convention was afterwards changed into three separate conventions). Great Britain reserves to herself, upon special grounds, during a period not exceeding two years, half of the duty on those articles, the free admission of which is stipulated by the present treaty—the reserve, however, not applying to articles of silk manufacture. The *ad valorem* duties payable on the importation into France of merchandise of British production and manufacture not to exceed a maximum of 25 per cent. The treaty to be binding for the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and for Algeria; it shall also remain in force for the space of ten years, and in case no notification be made by either of the powers, a year before the expiration of the said ten years, of their intention to put an end to the treaty, it shall continue in force another year, and so on from year to year. An additional article, dated February 25, raised the surtax on French brandies and spirits imported into the United Kingdom to 5d.



trast the position of England with that of any other country in the world. Has not the adhesion to the policy of non-interference by England been most beneficial? Has there ever been a period when England has occupied a prouder or more powerful position than that which she at present fills? As, therefore, she has attained that position while adhering to the policy of non-interference, I trust that the House of Commons, which, on the last night of the session, clearly expressed its opinion in favour of that policy, will, at the commencement of the present session, take this opportunity of asking explanations of Her Majesty's government, or in other words, will show to Her Majesty's government that if they continue in that policy they will receive the support of the House; but that, if they diverge from it, they must offer to the House reasons far greater than any that have yet reached my ear, and arguments of more weighty import than I believe will be introduced into this debate."

He had been told, continued the leader of the Opposition, that during the autumn overtures had been made to the French government, by Lord John Russell, to enter into a special agreement for the settlement of Italian affairs. What was the nature of those overtures? He was opposed to the congress, and to any interference with Italy. She was not in a condition to be served by diplomacy. "The moral I draw," said Mr. Disraeli in conclusion, "is, that a country in that state is in a condition far beyond the management and settlement of courts and cabinets and congresses. National independence is not created by protocols, nor public liberty guaranteed by treaties. All such arrangements have been tried before, and the consequence has been a sickly and short-lived offspring. What is going on in Italy—never mind whose may have been the original fault, what the present errors—what is going on in Italy can only be solved by the will, the energy, the sentiment and the thought of the population themselves."

Lord Palmerston briefly replied. The commercial treaty, he said, was an exceptional arrangement, and did not imply any change in opinion on the principle which should govern those matters. With regard to Italy the government had made no overtures to France; and England entered the congress perfectly free to decide upon what course she thought best. Of one thing the country could be assured, that no foreign force would be exerted to control the Italian people in the management of their own affairs. Italy was to settle her own questions in her own way, but the powers would advise her how to act; she might accept or reject such advice as she pleased.

The most exciting feature in the session was the budget. The year 1860, it had been said, was to be a memorable one in the history of finance; the war duties on tea and sugar were to be lessened, the period for which the income tax was voted had expired, and the new commercial treaty with France was to be introduced. The country was most anxious to hear how Mr. Gladstone would deal with these alterations, and what additional taxation he would suggest; nor was this anxiety lessened by the fact that the financial statement was postponed a few days owing to the ill-health of the chancellor of the exchequer. However, on February 10, 1860, Mr. Gladstone had sufficiently recovered to be enabled to lay before a crowded House the balance-sheet of the nation. The speech he delivered on that occasion was one of the most careful and elaborate of his famous budget orations, and well deserves perusal even at the present day, when the interest in most of its details has died out. We shall content ourselves with but a brief summary of the statement he made. The balance was against us. The war with China rendered a supplementary estimate of £850,000 necessary. Owing to the commercial treaty with France import duties would have to be remitted, which would create a loss to the revenue of £1,190,000. Then certain duties

—notably the paper duty—were to be reduced, which would entail a loss of some £2,000,000. The expenditure for the year was estimated at £70,014,000, and the income at £60,700,000. To supply this deficiency the income tax, instead of being totally abolished as had been promised, was to be raised to tenpence in the pound; the tea and sugar duties were to be retained at the figure at which they had stood since the war; the hop and malt credits were again shortened, while the Exchange bills were to be renewed. The duties on wine and brandy were to be materially reduced.

The budget, as a whole, was generally approved of, but it led to much discussion. Upon the motion to go into committee on the Customs Act, Mr. Disraeli brought forward an amendment to the effect that the House should not go into such committee until an opportunity had presented itself for considering the commercial treaty. He desired such treaty to be laid before the House, so that members should fully consider its clauses before being inextricably bound by its terms. He was afraid that those who then might vote for the reduction or remission of duty would find themselves unable to oppose the commercial treaty, when placed before them, which carried their own reductions into effect. First let them consider the treaty, and then the budget. He recommended that the precedent of the treaty with France in 1786 should be followed. "Now let the House observe this," he said, "that in the exposition with which Mr. Pitt introduced that treaty of commerce with France in 1787, there was not the slightest allusion to the effect which that treaty would have on the revenue of the country, though its effect must have been considerable. There was not the slightest allusion to his great and comprehensive measures of fiscal and financial reform, although it was his purpose to submit to the committee upon that great bill the resolutions which had been passed in the committee on the commercial treaty. In March, Mr. Pitt intro-

duced his great measure of financial reform. And what did he do in April? Why, at the right time Mr. Pitt proposed his budget. And I ask the House now, why are we to be treated differently from the Commons in 1787? Why should we not have the commercial treaty, the comprehensive measure of financial reform, and then the budget, brought forward in their natural order and submitted to us in that manner, which would give us frequent and ample opportunities for that matured debate and that criticism which questions of such importance and of such complicated character demand?" He also objected to the appointment of Mr. Cobden as the secret agent of the government, and declared that the treaty would indicate the idiosyncrasy of the negotiator. The amendment was, however, negatived by a large majority.

Mr. Disraeli again criticised the budget, upon the motion of Mr. Du Cane against the re-imposition of the income tax at so high a rate. He said that the budget aimed at too much, and provided too little. Mr. Gladstone had under-estimated the deficiency in the exchequer, which would be further increased by the reductions which were proposed. He had no prejudice against a treaty with France; but he objected to the commercial treaty because, apart from the financial conditions involved, it was an injurious measure. "I don't think," he said, "there ever was a treaty drawn up apparently with less forethought or less knowledge of the circumstances with which the negotiators had to deal, which altogether contains so many arrangements injurious not only to the trade of England, but inferentially and ultimately to that of France, or which is better calculated to sow the seeds of discord and dissension between the two countries.

. . . As regards commercial intercourse with France there is on this side of the House no political opposition to such a course, but on the contrary the greatest readiness to enter into arrangements for that object. But we object to the treaty



as a treaty not skilfully negotiated, and as one that occasions a considerable deficiency in our revenue—probably a much more considerable deficiency than the chancellor of the exchequer estimates.”

Though the doubling of the income tax, and the permission granted to confectioners to sell French wines, gave rise to much discussion, the feature in the budget which was regarded with the least favour was the repeal of the paper duty. “The duty on paper,” writes a recent historian, “was the last remnant of an ancient system of finance which pressed severely on journalism. The stamp duty was originally imposed with the object of checking the growth of seditious newspapers. It was reduced, increased, reduced again, and increased again, until in the early part of the century it stood at fourpence on each copy of a newspaper issued. In 1836 it was brought down to the penny, represented by the red stamp on every paper, which most of us can still remember. There was besides this a considerable duty—sixpence, or some such sum—on every advertisement in a newspaper. Finally, there was the heavy duty on the paper material itself. A journal, therefore, could not come into existence until it had made provision for all these factitious and unnecessary expenses. The consequence was that a newspaper was a costly thing.”

Still, in spite of the advantages that would arise from this step, the abolition of the duty was strongly disapproved of, and especially by the Conservative party. To repeal the paper duty and to double the income tax were, it was said, an inversion of the order of things. Such a repeal would sacrifice a large revenue whilst the community would derive little benefit, for the price of books and the circulation of literature were, it was stated, very little affected by the duty on paper. It was a flagrant abandonment of the principles of Sir Robert Peel. With a heavy income tax, and with tea and sugar war duties to remit, so harmless a tax as the

paper duty was absurd. Then the paper manufacturers and the proprietors of expensive journals, who had no wish to see the country flooded with cheap newspapers, opposed the repeal. So strong was the opposition, that though Mr. Gladstone was ultimately successful he carried his resolutions by dwindling majorities. The second reading was carried by a majority of fifty-three; the third reading by a majority of only nine. “Can you reconcile it to yourselves,” cried Mr. Disraeli, “to sacrifice, in the present financial condition of the country, a large branch of revenue which the trade interested—and that is an important consideration—does not want you to part with, and which the evidence before you proves is not a declining but an increasing revenue?” The peers somewhat unconstitutionally rejected the repeal, but Mr. Gladstone got over the difficulty by including in the following year all the chief financial propositions of the budget in one bill, instead of dividing it into several bills. Thus it became a money bill, and outside the region of the criticism of the House of Lords.

The leader of the Opposition was now to have his “tit-for-tat” with the government upon the question of reform. On Thursday, March 1, 1860, Lord John Russell introduced his measure, which was entitled the Representation of the People Bill. The country was quite indifferent to the matter; it was much more interested in the annexation of Savoy and Nice by France; in the prospects of a French invasion, the latest scare invented; and in having to pay a heavy income tax. Even the House of Commons was barely full, and as indifferent as if the debate was about to turn upon the details of an Indian budget. The bill of Lord John was very simple. It proposed to introduce a £10 occupation franchise for the counties, and to reduce the borough franchise to £6. The law as to rating was to remain unchanged, but the payment of poor rates only, and not as formerly of assessed taxes

also, was to be made a condition of the vote. The bill also proposed to take one member from twenty-five boroughs which returned two members each; to give to the West Riding two additional seats, to the southern division of Lancashire two, and to each of the following counties or county divisions one; North Lancashire, Middlesex, West Kent, South Devon, South Stafford, North Riding, the port of Lindsay, South Essex, East Somerset, West Norfolk, West Cornwall, and North Essex; it suggested that Kensington and Chelsea should form a borough with two members; that Birkenhead, Staleybridge, and Barnsley should each have one member; and that Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, and Leeds should each return one additional member. In case of places where there were three members, it advocated that the third member should represent the minority. It was also proposed to give a member to the University of London. Upon the second reading Mr. Disraeli rose to oppose the measure.

"Sir, I understand," he began (March 19, 1860), "that the promoters of this bill claim for it the merit of simplicity. Simplicity in the operations of nature is admirable, because there we see adequate means adapted to the end proposed, without complexity. But in matters of legislation simplicity is a quality of an ambiguous character; because if we find that the means are not adequate to the end, then it is not simplicity at which we arrive, but rather imperfection and incompleteness. Now, what is the end proposed by this bill? The end is, 'to amend the representation of the people in England and Wales.' Are the means adequate to that end? My first impression, when I took up this bill, was that it might have been drawn up four or five centuries ago. Except the land on which we tread, and masses of brick and mortar, I do not see any property referred to as a qualification for exercising the franchise, and that in a country where for more than a century the people have been doing nothing but

creating and accumulating various properties to an incalculable amount. The claims of intelligence, of acquirement, and education are not noticed. The bill, indeed, is of a mediæval character, but without any of the inspiration of the feudal system or any of the genius of the middle ages. It proposes to itself three principal objects, which I suppose I may consider three principles. It is to extend the suffrage in counties and boroughs, and to effect some redistribution of parliamentary seats."

He then proceeded to deal with the details of the bill. With reference to the borough franchise the government had been actuated, not as to the fitness of the recipients, but as to the number of persons they could enfranchise. The existing borough constituency of England was 440,000, to which number that bill would add 217,000—the addition consisting almost entirely of one homogeneous class. How would that new constituency act upon the old? In some boroughs the constituency would be trebled, in others doubled; and about one half of the boroughs would be under the influence of the new class about to be enfranchised.

"Let us now consider," continued Mr. Disraeli, "whether the particular class upon whom the noble lord is about to confer this great political power are a class who are incapable, or who are unlikely to exercise it. Are they a class who have shown no inclination to combine? Are they a class incapable of organization? Quite the reverse. If we look to the history of this country during the present century, we shall find that the aristocracy, or upper classes, have on several very startling occasions shown a great power of organization. I think it cannot be denied that the working classes, especially since the peace of 1815, have shown a remarkable talent for organization, and a power of discipline and combination inferior to none. The same, I believe, cannot be said of the middle classes. With the exception of the Anti-Corn Law League, I cannot recall at this



moment any great successful political organization of the middle classes; and living in an age when everything is known, we now know that that great confederation, which ultimately proved so triumphant, owed its success to a great and unforeseen calamity [the Irish famine], and was on the eve of dispersion and dissolution only a short time before that terrible event occurred. [Here Mr. Bright cheered ironically.] I can only say that my authority is one of the most eminent members of your own confederation. But the fortune of the League does not affect my argument, which is founded on the fact that the working classes have shown on various occasions, and for long continuous periods, powers of organization, discipline, and combination quite equal to those of the upper classes; but that the middle classes, with the exception of the Anti-Corn Law League, have not, in my memory, conducted any great political confederation to a successful issue. Then the class to which you are about to give this predominance is perfectly capable of organization; and from the days of the Luddites to the present period the tradition of frequently secret, but always well-disciplined organization, has been preserved among the working classes. It is said that the working classes are exceedingly intelligent and educated, and therefore likely to appreciate the possession of the franchise. But these are reasons why you should take care, in legislating on this subject, that you do not give them a predominance. What has been the object of our legislative labours for many years, but to put an end to a class legislation which was much complained of? But you are now proposing to establish a class legislation of a kind which may well be viewed with apprehension."

Mr. Disraeli then discussed Lord John Russell's proposal to reduce the county franchise. "The county franchise," he said, "as proposed in the bill, will greatly reduce the influence of the landed proprietors and of the landed interest in this country. I object to any such reduction, and I will

tell the honourable member, who seems alarmed or annoyed by that expression, why it is I so object. I look round upon Europe at the present moment, and I see no country of any importance in which political liberty can be said to exist. I attribute the creation and the maintenance of our liberties to the influence of the land, and to our tenure of land. In England there are large properties round which men can rally, and that, in my mind, forms the only security in an old European country against that centralized form of government which has prevailed, and must prevail in every European community where there is no such counterpoise. It is our tenure of land to which we are indebted for our public liberties, because it is the tenure of land which makes local government a fact in England, and which allows the great body of Englishmen to be ruled by traditionary influence and by habit, instead of being governed, as in other countries, by mere police. Well, sir, believing that the proposed reconstruction of the county franchise has a tendency to diminish the just and salutary influence of the land of this country, I highly object to the noble lord's plan." As to the redistribution of parliamentary seats, the bill went too far, or not far enough. Mr. Disraeli objected to the establishment of what he called cumulative members for places already represented, and he objected to minorities being represented; the only way a minority should be represented was by becoming a majority. The bill was a bad measure; still he was not prepared to reject it upon the second reading. He hoped, however, it would be withdrawn.

Mr. Disraeli again criticised the bill (June 4, 1860) on going into committee, when Lord John Russell announced his intention of withdrawing the Scotch and Irish reform bill, proceeding only with the measure for England. Lord John was so anxious that his bill should pass, that provided it only became law, he was willing for the House of Commons to propose any

franchise it pleased. He would accept anything, if the House would but agree to something that would shuffle such an impediment out of the course! Anything the House would settle would be accepted by the government! So much for the high policy which had destroyed a ministry and dissolved a parliament!

"This is a grave position," exclaimed Mr. Disraeli. "The noble lord has come forward to-night, not to make a mere ordinary observation on going into committee of supply, but to announce a policy in dealing with these measures which will startle the whole country. He has made an announcement which, in a constitutional, in a national point of view, is one of the gravest announcements ever made to parliament—namely, that we should reform the representation of England without any security that the representation of Ireland and Scotland shall be reformed. Such a proposition has never before been made to parliament by any minister. Is there anything urgent that we should pursue so unprecedented, so indecorous a course? On the contrary, the noble lord, even at this immense price, does not contemplate accomplishing the policy which he recommends. Whatever he has said respecting the working classes, he has no conviction of the absolute and imperial necessity of the measure which he originally brought forward; nor has he any conviction that if it were carried it would accomplish and fulfil its purpose. What does he tell us? 'If you do not like this, for God's sake propose something else, and I give you to understand that your proposition will be received by the government in a candid and fair spirit.' What does that mean? It means that the government have no settled policy whatever which they intend to carry out. Giving up Ireland, giving up Scotland, coming to the members for England and asking them to place themselves in the despicable position described, calling upon the House to legislate in this scrambling fashion—all this proves that

there is no conviction of the necessity of this measure, no confidence in its provisions. It shows that the noble lord, from the first, exercising a fatal influence—as I told him when I sat opposite to him, and he occupied these benches—exercising a sinister influence on the fortunes of his party and on his own reputation, was induced to recommend a policy in opposition which it is impossible for him to accomplish as a minister. It shows that the noble lord is hazarding the safety of the country, in order, not that he may realize a fair reputation, but that he may terminate the question in a manner in no way dignified and which is hardly respectable, by recognizing that in opposition he was tempted to pursue an unwise, immature, and, I will now say, even a factious policy."

It soon became evident that the reform bill of 1860, like its predecessors, was doomed, and would soon be consigned to the limbo of rejected measures. The country was indifferent to it; the press sneered at it; and it encountered keen opposition from both sides of the House. Accordingly, on the second week of June Lord John Russell withdrew his bill, thus adopting a course which Mr. Disraeli described as "wise and not undignified."

Parliament was prorogued by commission August 28, 1860, and a session in which there had been much talk—that kind of parliamentary eloquence which is the tomb of parliamentary action—but little actual result, came to an end.

During the winter of this year Mr. Disraeli made a speech which excited a good deal of attention at the time. The question of church-rates was then being agitated by the nonconformist element in the country, and had frequently come before parliament, where hostility to the tax was slowly but gradually gaining ground.\* At a meeting

\* Before the abolition of this tax church-rates were payable by the parishioners and occupiers of the land within a parish, for the purpose of repairing and maintaining "the body of the church and the belfry, the churchyard fence, the bells, seats, and ornaments, and of defraying the expenses attending the service of the church." The duty of keeping the church in repair devolved on the rector, or vicar, or both together, in



of clergy and laity of the rural deanery at Amersham, Mr. Disraeli (December 4, 1860) was asked to express his views on the subject. The speech he then delivered was one of the first of a series upon the necessity of the union between church and state.

In this country, he began, great issues were generally tried on collateral points. It was now accepted that the discussion of the question of church-rates involved that of a national church; therefore it was of the last importance that churchmen should not make a mistake in the matter. "I will view," he said, "the question now only secularly, and even in that limited sense I shrink from realizing what would be the consequences to this country of the termination of the connection between church and state. The political and social relations of the national church to England must be considered. As for the political, the termination of the alliance must break up our parochial constitution. Our political constitution is built upon our parochial constitution. The parish is one of the strongest securities for local government, and on local government mainly depends our political liberty. As to the social relations of the church with the community, they are so comprehensive and so complicated, so vast and various, that the most far-seeing cannot calculate the consequences of the projected change. It is not merely the education of the people

proportion to their benefice, where there were both in the same church. Church-rates existed in England by virtue of the common law, and though nothing is known as to their commencement, or introduction, the tax dates back to a remote past. Church-rates, or something equivalent, certainly appear to have been in existence as a payment by the laity, independent of tithes, in the time of Canute, whose sixty-third law, "*De Fano Reficiendo*," states that all persons ought of right to contribute to the repair of churches. The tax was imposed by the parishioners themselves at a meeting summoned by the churchwardens for that purpose. If the parish failed to meet, the churchwardens might themselves impose a rate; but if the meeting assembled it rested with the parishioners to determine the amount of the rate, and it would seem that they also had the power to negative the imposition of a rate altogether. The existing poor-rate of the parish was generally taken as the criterion for the imposition of the church-rate. The ecclesiastical courts had the exclusive authority of deciding on the validity of a rate, and the liability of a party to pay it.

that is concerned, it is even their physical condition. I would almost say, that if by some convulsion of nature some important district of the country, one on which the food and the industry of the community mainly depend, were suddenly swept from the surface, the change would not be greater than would arise by the withdrawal of the influence of the church from our society. The fact is, the Church of England is part of England—a point of view not sufficiently contemplated by those who speculate on changes in her character and position."

Why, he asked, had the movement for the abolition of church-rates been so active and progressive of late years? He attributed it to the want of union and organization among churchmen. When churchmen were united, the church was never endangered. That was shown in the years which elapsed between 1831 and 1841. During that period England was in a state of semi-revolution, and Ireland of semi-rebellion; the Church of England was the chosen arena for the fierce struggle of parties, and governments were formed on the principle of appropriating its property to secular purposes. But the church baffled all those attempts, because churchmen were united and organized. Why were they not united and organized now? There had been no union and organization among churchmen since 1841.

Mr. Disraeli attributed this want of union and organization to two causes: first, to the disruption of political parties; secondly, to disputes among the clergy themselves. Were these permanent causes? It was not the first time, by many instances, that political connections had been broken up in this country; but there was an irresistible tendency in their public life, that parties both in and out of parliament should reflect opinion, and not personal interests and feelings. Time, therefore, inevitably adjusted, as it was then adjusting, the proper balance of political connections. With respect to the controversies among the

clergy themselves, as distinguished from the church generally, he thought there was exaggeration and misconception. It was impossible—and were it possible, it was not, perhaps, to be desired—that in a national church of a free country like England, there should not be discrepancy of opinion among the clergy on matters of ritual, and even, in some degree, of doctrine. It had always been so. Where there was opinion, and especially religious opinion, there would be periods of excess. They lived in one of those periods. They were periods of trial, but not necessarily of danger; and those who too readily augured from them the worst consequences showed an ignorance alike of human nature and the history of their own country. They should remember that before this a cardinal's hat had been offered to an Anglican archbishop, while there was also a time when a Socinian prelate sat on the episcopal bench; but the Church of England had survived those temptations and experiments. The great body of the community had always rallied round that *via media* which had been eulogized and vindicated by the most eminent of their divines, by Hooker, by Taylor, by Barrow. The period of excess had passed away, and the influence of the church had remained only greater and more beneficial.

"But then," asked Mr. Disraeli, "arises the question, Suppose churchmen were again united and organized, as I hope they may be, on what course shall they agree with regard to church-rates? We cannot conceal from ourselves that on this subject there are two opinions among our friends. Some are for compromise. What does compromise mean? Does it mean improvement? If so, I am for compromise. It may be expedient that the church-rate levied in a district should be applied to the church of that district; that when the rate is levied, the purposes to which it is to be applied should be more precisely defined; that the means of obtaining the rate when voted should be more prompt

and effective; that there should be no particular charge called church-rate, but a general parochial rate from which the necessary expenses for the fabric and the service of the church should be deducted by the wardens under certain limitations. All these may be improvements, but all these are matters of detail; and what is the use of attempting to legislate on matters of detail when the principle is not only contested, but rejected in one branch of the legislature? Some of our friends would go further than this. They would exempt the Dissenter from the charge. That is not compromise; that is surrender. It is acknowledging that the Church of England is no longer a national church. But it is conceding more even than that. This is a public charge of which all the circumstances are of a popular character. It is ancient; it is for a general, not to say a common purpose; it is levied by public votes. If in a country where the majority decide everything, the minority are, on the ground of conscientious scruple, to be exempted from a public payment, on what principle can society be held together? Landowners might have a conscientious scruple against paying the public creditor; peace societies might have a conscientious scruple against paying war taxes. What the Dissenter demands is, in fact, an oligarchical privilege; and the principle, if conceded and pursued, may lead to general confusion."

There was one more objection, he continued, urged against levying the church-rate; that it was impracticable. Was it impracticable? In the vast majority of parishes it was raised with facility. But then it was urged that the parishes which refused were the parishes of large towns, and that their aggregate population was scarcely inferior to that vast majority of parishes in which it was raised. Yet their immense population were not Dissenters. They were not the votaries of rival creeds and establishments. They were ignorant, or indifferent, or more, unfortunate. Were they, then, to maintain that the church was to retire



from the duty of contending with their unsympathizing and unbelieving mass? The greatest triumphs of the church had been accomplished in great towns. If the influence of the church in great towns was limited, it was not because her means were ineffective, but because they were insufficient. When they considered the nature of the religious principle, he was a bold man who would maintain that in their teeming seats of industry there might not be destined for the church a triumphant future. Who could foresee the history of the next quarter of a century? It would not probably be as tranquil as the last. What if it were to be a period of great religious confusion and excitement? The country would cling to a church which combined toleration with orthodoxy, and united divine teaching with human sympathies. Was it wise, then, publicly to announce by legislation that the Church of England relinquished the character of a national church?

On these grounds, then, he declined to sanction the principle of exemption. He felt deeply the responsibility of giving such advice. He knew he was opposing the recommendation of the committee of the House of Lords, in 1859, and of what was then at least the unanimous opinion of the bench of bishops. He need not say that for the House of Lords he entertained profound respect. In maturity of judgment and calmness of inquiry he thought the labours of the great committees of the Lords superior to those of the House of Commons; in acuteness of investigation they were not inferior; but in the interpretation of public opinion, he thought, and it was perhaps in the necessity of things, that the Commons had the advantage. He thought that the Lords' committee were precipitate in their course in the matter of church-rates; he thought they had mistaken public humour for public opinion.

"I am sustained in the difficult and painful course I am taking," he said in conclusion, "by the recollection of

what occurred in the spring, and at the last meeting of the clergy and laity in this deanery. At that time the second reading of Sir John Trelawny's bill\* had been carried by a much reduced majority, and the advocates of what is fallaciously called compromise were strongly in favour of what they termed seizing the opportunity for a settlement. I was of a different opinion. I did not think that the advantage the church had then obtained was only a happy casualty. I thought it was the break of dawn. I did my utmost to dissuade my friends from relinquishing the contest, and ultimately, on my own responsibility, opposed the third reading of Sir John Trelawny's bill. The whole country was agitated on the occasion by the opponents of the church to regain the lost ground. Instead of that, the majority against church-rates, which had sat like an incubus on the church for twenty years, virtually disappeared. We owe to that division our commanding position. It is in our power, if we choose it, to close this controversy for ever, not by a feeble concession, but by a bold assertion of public right. We sent 5000 petitions to the House of Commons last session in favour of that public right; let us send 15,000 this. Every parish should have its petition; they should not be merely signed by the incumbent and churchwardens, as they are in some cases; or by ratepayers merely, as in many cases; but by as many persons as they can obtain. It is the cause of all. There is no greater mistake than to suppose that

\* On the Abolition of Church-Rates Bill introduced (February 8, 1860) by Sir John Trelawny, Mr. Disraeli strongly opposed the measure. He objected to it because it would revolutionize the parochial constitution of the country, and tend to the downfall of the Established Church. In the debate on the third reading of the bill (April 27, 1860), Mr. Disraeli again raised his voice in opposition. The abolition of church-rates, he said, would act detrimentally to the interests of the Church of England. If the House believed the existence of the Church of England to be one of the strongest elements of society, one of the most powerful of their institutions, and the best security of their liberties, they should reject the measure proposed by Sir John Trelawny. The bill passed by a majority of nine. On being sent up to the Lords it was rejected by a majority of ninety-seven.

petitions produce little effect on the House of Commons. They produce great effect. The number of petitions, the number and nature of their signatures, the classes from which they proceed, are all weighed and canvassed. There is a report every week sent by a select committee to every member of parliament on these heads. The clergy never extensively move in this manner without exercising great authority. You cannot petition too much. You should not wait for the attack. You should send in your petitions as soon as parliament meets, on a broad issue, in favour of maintaining the union between church and state, and incidentally in favour of church-rates. You should also encourage and establish church defence associations in every part of England. You should habituate the laity to act with the clergy in all matters of public moment to the church. There is also a third course to take, and here I will address myself particularly to my clerical friends. The laity, through that excellent body the Committee of Laymen, have done their duty in that respect. I have always discouraged the clergy from entering into mere party politics; but now I tell you

frankly that if you want to succeed, you must bring your influence to bear on members of the House of Commons. The question of church-rates has fortunately not yet fallen into the catalogue of party politics. More than one member of the present cabinet records at least his vote in their favour. The clergy must make members of parliament understand that, though this is not a party, it is a political question, and a political question on which in their minds there ought not to be, and there could not be, any mistake. I can assure you of my own knowledge there are many members of parliament who on this question give careless votes, and think that by so doing they are giving some vague liberal satisfaction without preparing any future inconvenience for themselves. Let our clerical friends, Whig or Tory, Conservative or Liberal, make these gentlemen understand that in their opinion on the union of church and state depend in a large measure the happiness, the greatness, and the liberty of England." As we shall have occasion to notice in subsequent chapters of this work, this advice did not fall on deaf ears.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

### A VIGILANT CRITIC.

THE atmosphere at this time was charged with war, and with that irritation which often results in war. Across the Atlantic the American Union was in a state of disintegration. Abraham Lincoln had been declared president-elect of the United States, and political agitation at once began to work and seethe in the South. For some time observers of American politics had been predicting a conflict between the northern and southern states of the Union. The abolitionists, as they daily increased in strength, became more and more clamorous against slavery. Their declamations, however, mattered little to the South, so long as the North were in such a minority as not to affect materially the course of legislation; but when the abolitionists, owing to immigration and the spread of English ideas throughout the North, swelled into a formidable faction the slave-owners became alarmed, and banding themselves together, resolved to resist any infringement of their rights. The division between the two parties widened every day, and it was soon evident from the tone of Congress that a struggle for the mastery was impending. The fight for the Territories first brought both sections into collision. The advantage of attaching each new state to its own side was apparent to both of the contending parties—an advantage which was the more manifest as the rival powers became more equal, and the accession of a free state was received with a joy by the North only to be equalled by the delight of the South at the addition of another slave state. Upon the proposal for the admission of Kansas into the Union the argument degenerated into a free fight. The Southerners poured hordes of desperadoes into the territory, who at

once proceeded to violent measures against the immigrants transported there by the organization of the abolitionists. After a fierce struggle, which resulted in no little slaughter, the anti-slavery section was victorious, and ousted their opponents. The South were not only defeated, but found themselves more and more incapable of resisting the pressure put upon them in Congress by the abolitionists. The Missouri compromise, which allowed slavery below a certain latitude, was annulled, and measures passed prohibiting the introduction of negro bondage into any territory of the United States.

Then came the insurrection at Harper's Ferry. John Brown, a man who had fought with signal courage in Kansas against the supporters of slavery, now conceived the idea of waging war with the dealers in human flesh, and resolved to smite the Southerners hip and thigh. Accompanied by a few followers, he crossed the Potomac at Harper's Ferry, and entered Virginia, where he incited the slaves to rise against their owners. His words did not fall on unwilling ears; an insurrection was created, and a smart conflict between master and negro ensued. After a brief struggle Brown was captured, tried for treason, and sentenced to death. "Gentlemen," he said to his judges, "make an end of slavery, or slavery will make an end of you." Much sympathy was expressed for his fate; and the South had to confess that the extinction of their rights as slave-owners was certain as soon as the abolitionists could muster strength enough to control the government. The election of Buchanan, the pro-slavery candidate, as president of the United

States, delayed for a time the necessity of secession. But only for a time. It was evident that the election of 1860 would settle the vexed question whether the North or the South should govern the Union. At last the crisis came. The South put forth all their energies, and were completely defeated. Abraham Lincoln received the vast majority of Northern votes, and consequently triumphed. Symptoms of disunion at once appeared, and several of the states seceded from the Union. Before the end of the first month in 1861, South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas had severed themselves from the American Union.

Complete independence of Northern control was now aimed at. Delegates from the seceded states assembled at Montgomery, in Alabama, and agreed to a constitution and provisional government of which Jefferson Davis was elected president. The constitution was almost identical with that of the United States, but with a more emphatic enunciation of the rights of property in slaves. The selection of Jefferson Davis for the office of president of the Southern confederacy was most judicious. He was admirably suited for the post. "An advocate of states rights on principle," writes an American historian, "he was naturally a good representative of a community which owed its existence to the assertion of state rights. With a judicious mixture of audacity and caution, he knew when to put forth his energies with effect, and when to wait for his opportunity. A man of pure private morals and temperate habits, he won general respect; unselfish, single-minded, and self-reliant, he commanded the admiration of the mass of his Southern countrymen. His bearing and tone fitted him to be the elect of the planter aristocracy—lofty, determined, and full of contempt for those who held opposite principles. When unbiassed by personal friendship, he showed himself an acute judge of men, regarded as tools for working out a design;

above all, incapable of passion, and therefore perhaps the most suited to mould a passionate and impulsive race. An admirable judge of effect, no man knew better when to assume virtuous indignation or the appearance of outraged dignity. A scholar, and in style a gentleman, all his official documents were penned in such clear and elaborate English that many persons in the Old country gave all Southerners the credit of a refinement to which only the upper ten thousand of the slave states had any just claim."

In the West civil war was on the eve of breaking out, but in the distant East war was happily at an end. Before the close of the year 1860, China had agreed to the terms imposed upon her, and England and France had laid down their arms. The Chinese, however, had ample occasion to regret having aroused the animosity of such formidable enemies. The Taku forts, at the mouth of the Peiho, had been captured; the battles of Chang-kia-wan and Pa-li-chau had facilitated the advance of the allied English and French upon Peking; Peking had been invested, and the summer palace of the Emperor of China, after having been ravaged by the French, had been burnt to the ground to avenge the treacherous arrest and subsequent murder of those English who had started for Tangchow under a flag of truce. Peace was ushered in by a convention signed in Peking, by which the treaty of Tien-Tsin was ratified, and a large indemnity to be paid, and compensation in money given to the families of the murdered English prisoners. The treaty and convention were to be proclaimed throughout the empire.

In Europe the state of Italy gave rise to much anxiety. In spite of all protests from Austria the new kingdom, under the protecting influence of France, was rapidly developing its territories and resources. Garibaldi had landed at Marsala, in Sicily, and in a few days, notwithstanding the disapproval of the Sardinian government at his proceedings, had assumed the



dictatorship of the island in the name of King Victor Emmanuel. A Liberal ministry had been formed at Naples, the town was declared in a state of siege, and the queen-mother had to take refuge in Gaeta. Shortly afterwards Francis II. took his departure from Naples, and Victor Emmanuel was proclaimed King of Italy. Then, whilst the peninsula was consolidating itself into a kingdom, diplomacy, warfare, and intrigue were employing all their strength to defeat the objects of the Sardinian government, and the wishes of the Italian people. Against the movements of Sardinia, Austria protested, the Pope protested, and the King of the Two Sicilies was in arms supporting his protest. On the other hand Victor Emmanuel, conscious that the hopes of the Italian people were centred in his aim to make the peninsula, from the gulf of Taranto to the Lepontine Alps, an Italian kingdom, still pressed on and declined to stay his hand.

With foreign affairs in this condition, the houses of parliament met February 5, 1861. In the speech from the throne Her Majesty stated that her relations with foreign powers continued to be friendly and satisfactory; that events of great importance were taking place in Italy, but "believing that the Italians ought to be left to settle their own affairs, I have not thought it right to exercise any active interference in those matters;" that the operations of the allied forces in China had been attended with complete success, and that all matters in dispute had been satisfactorily settled; that "serious differences have arisen among the states of the North American Union. It is impossible for me not to look with great concern upon any events which can affect the happiness and welfare of a people nearly allied to my subjects by descent, and closely connected with them by the most intimate and friendly relations. My heartfelt wish is that these differences may be susceptible of a satisfactory adjustment." The subject of reform was not mentioned. The omission

was generally approved of; but when we remember that the Conservative party had been ousted from office solely because it had introduced a reform bill not sufficiently inclusive to satisfy the wants of the people, and now that the Liberals were in power the subject was shelved altogether, such an ignominious desertion of what had been so frequently spoken of as a great political necessity, certainly did not speak very highly either for the sincerity or the consistency of the government of Lord Palmerston. We do not often approve of the coarse invective indulged in by Mr. Bright, but on this occasion the censure he passed upon the conduct of ministers was fully deserved.

In the debate upon the address Mr. Disraeli spoke at some length. He approved of the course the government had adopted with regard to the subject of parliamentary reform. "A measure for the reconstruction of this House," he said, "should not be introduced at a time when there is no probability of its being accepted; and a minister would incur a great responsibility who again introduced such a subject from a mistaken sense of honour to a party which was anything but unanimous in supporting his original proposal." At the present moment the country was more interested in foreign than in domestic matters. He himself was bewildered as to the policy of the government with respect to their foreign relations, and as to the prospects of the country with regard to any of those great questions which arose out of them. He wished to know what was the real state of their relations with France, or whether they were looking about for new allies? If a new alliance was meditated, upon what principle was it to be formed? Was it to be upon a disturbing or tranquillizing principle? Were we to support Sardinia against Naples, or Naples against Sardinia? Were we to support Austria against Venetia? Who knew? We had supported Sardinia, and we had supported Naples; we had supported Austria,

and we had not deserted Venetia. In the old days diplomacy was conducted in a secret fashion, whilst now we had "a candid foreign policy." "What in former times," he said, "in the days of secret diplomacy, would have been a soliloquy in Downing Street, now becomes a speech in the House of Commons."

And yet with all this candour, no one knew what policy the government was adopting. Ministers were in favour of Italian unity; had they effected it? "We know," said Mr. Disraeli, "that a powerful French army was powerfully entrenched in the centre of Italy. We know that the contemplated capital of Italy is not in the possession of the Italians. In this age of jubilant nationality Rome is still garrisoned by the Gauls. We know that Venetia is bristling with Austrian artillery, and swarming with German and Sclavonian legions. We know that even the King of the Two Sicilies, deprived of his crown by universal and unanimous suffrage, unfortunately followed by frequent insurrections and martial law, is even at this moment in possession of the two prime strongholds of his kingdom. We know that in the south of Italy they have combined the horrors of revolution with the shame of conquest. These are not the characteristics of a united Italy." He did not deny that Italy might finally be united; but it would not be by the moral influence of England, but by the will and the sword of France.

"It is the will of France," he said, "that can alone restore Rome to the Italians; it is the sword of France—if any sword can do it—that alone can free Venetia from the Austrians. If the unity of Italy is to be effected by such influences and by such means, are we to suppose that a sovereign who is described as profound and crafty, and a people whom we know to be ambitious and quickwitted, will be prepared to make such an effort and to endure such a sacrifice—such a surpassing sacrifice and such an enormous effort—

without obtaining some result? Why, it would belie every principle of human nature. We cannot impute it to that sovereign and to such a people as the French, that they would not after such exertions expect to obtain some great political and public advantage. And it is obvious what that result would be. Those who under the circumstances I have stated will free the nation, will make their terms, and will be justified in making their terms. They will have an alliance, offensive and defensive, with Italy; and the Emperor of the French will then appear in the character which he has himself shadowed out, for which he has prepared the world, which the policy he had hitherto pursued with regard to Italy has shown that he has—not too anxiously—sought to fulfil, foreseeing its difficulties as well as its glory. The Emperor of the French will then come forward in the character of the head of the Latin race. He will find himself the emancipator of Italy at the head of a million of bayonets. A million of disciplined, and even of distinguished soldiers will be at his command and behest, and then it will be in his power—you having forced him to a policy in Italy which at first he was unwilling to pursue—to make those greater changes and aim at those greater results which I will only intimate and will not attempt to describe."

Mr. Disraeli then suggested that the Italian question should be settled on the basis of the treaty of Villafranca; that treaty secured a great southern barrier to Germany; it did not destroy the independence of the Pope; it did not endanger the independence of Switzerland, whilst Savoy and Nice still remained an appanage of the King of Sardinia. Any other course, he said, would menace England with danger. If the unity of Italy was to be effected, it could only be effected by a power which occupied Italy in great force; that unity could not be established under such auspices without results dangerous to the repose of Europe. It was therefore



absolutely necessary for ministers to be fully informed as to the relations of France with Italy.

In reply Lord John Russell stated, that Mr. Disraeli had conjured up doubts and fears which had no existence in fact. The government had constantly upheld the principle that Italy should be free to choose her own rulers and to settle her own affairs as she thought best. France had declared that no troops, Austrian or French, should be used to reinstate the deposed grand-dukes; and Austria had pledged her word not to cross the frontier. If the King of Naples would have granted a constitution, ministers would have preferred to see two kingdoms in Italy instead of one; still that was a question for the Italians themselves, and they were the best judges on that point. The policy of non-intervention was concurred in by France, and between the government and the Emperor of the French there was entire concord. The address was then agreed to.

The war in China having been concluded, the thanks of both houses of parliament were voted to the officers and men in Her Majesty's service who had been engaged in the expedition. In the House of Commons the vote was proposed by Lord Palmerston in a highly eulogistic speech, and seconded (February 14, 1861) by Mr. Disraeli. The leader of the Opposition acquitted himself with that tact and grace which always entered into his ceremonious speeches.

"The army and navy of England," he said, "have more than once expressed their conviction that one of their greatest rewards is to receive the thanks of parliament; and I trust I may say for the House that we consider it one of our greatest privileges to offer the expression of our thanks and admiration for their achievements. Although in the course of events that have occurred in China it is impossible to point to any of those immortal fields which posterity ever afterwards looks at with feelings of awe and admiration, yet merely in a military sense, and regarded simply in

reference to military considerations, there is one view of the case the importance of which cannot be overstated; and that is, that in a remote part of the world, and in a strange climate, we have found the health of our troops so wonderfully preserved. I attribute this to our now perfect organization, and to the application of all the resources of modern science to the maintenance of the health and the equipment of our troops; and if, as I believe, this result is not of an exceptional character, but one on which we may depend for the future, we may have the satisfaction of feeling that, so far as this is concerned, we have already mitigated one of the miseries of war. The noble viscount [Palmerston] has touched upon the singularity of such great results having been achieved, in a distant part of the world, by so small a body of men and at such a trifling sacrifice. Indeed, I think this is a subject which well deserves the consideration of the House. A handful of men, not, I believe, amounting in numbers to those who followed Xenophon, have waged war in a country almost in the remotest part of the globe, and have dictated peace in the ancient capital of a nation which numbers more than one-third of its population. Sir, this is not the first occasion during the last quarter of a century when mankind have been impressed with the immense influence which Europe exercises over the rest of the world. This is not the first occurrence of exploits which has proved the predominant power of that part of the globe in which it is our happiness to exist. But there are other considerations connected with this result which ought not, I think, to be absent from our thoughts. At this moment, under Providence, it is not merely this quarter of the globe, but we may say it is Western Europe that commands the world. Sir, if that power be so irresistible, if those means be so great, I think we ought all to feel that the moral responsibility of their exercise is proportionately increased. This appears to be a consideration which ought not to be wanting in the

councils of the sovereign, and which may blend advantageously even with the triumphant gratitude of parliaments."

Though the government had declined for the present to interest itself in the question of parliamentary reform, several private members refused to be a party to the shelving of so important a subject. Mr. Locke-King, who had for the last few years vainly endeavoured to achieve the reduction of the county franchise to a £10 qualification, again came forward to ride his hobby. He moved "that leave be given to bring in a bill to extend the franchise in counties in England and Wales." As there was no prospect, he said, of a government reform bill that session he thought the present a suitable moment to introduce the question once more before the House, and to propose an instalment of reform, extending the county franchise to £10 occupiers. If the House acceded to that proposition, it "would tend not only to improve, but to consolidate our institutions." Lord Palmerston replied, that he would neither oppose the motion nor argue the subject of the bill. There was a time for waiting as well as a time for action, and he thought the present was a time for waiting. He regretted that some of his friends, who piqued themselves upon being independent members, had deemed it their duty to anticipate the action of the ministers of the crown; such persons must, therefore, take upon themselves all the responsibility of the future progress of their measures, and allow the government perfect freedom of action in the matter. Mr. Disraeli said (Feb. 19, 1861) that, under the circumstances, he was not prepared to oppose the introduction of the bill, though every day he was more strongly of opinion, that if there ought to be a measure for the reconstruction of parliament, it should be large and comprehensive.

"If you cannot pass large and comprehensive measures," he said, "the only conclusion which I can draw is that

there is no necessity for them; but, when you are dealing with a subject so vast as the reconstruction of parliament, you require all the responsibility of a ministry, and all the information and all the regard to various interests which can be secured by it, but which cannot be expected from gentlemen who arrogate to themselves the title of 'independent members'—a title to which I trust that we all, even when in office, have a fair claim. An independent member takes up a fragment of a great subject; he becomes enamoured with the results of his own meditations; he thinks that the conclusions at which he has arrived from the force of his own thought are the only ones which can save the state; and he is too eager to force those conclusions upon the acceptance of parliament, without reference to the interests which their adoption may injure, but which ought to be duly considered in any scheme which attempts to do justice to the whole country. I have a strong objection to the measure which is introduced to-night by the hon. gentleman. I think that it would in many counties give power to those who are not fairly connected with the predominant property and the predominant industry of the county. . . . I cannot myself conceive at this moment—I am unable to form any clear idea—as to what can be the object of hon. gentlemen opposite and their supporters in attempting this reform of the House of Commons by measures of retail.

"The great wholesale firm have announced that it is a transaction beyond their powers of capital and enterprise. What probability of success, then, can attend these hucksters, who come forward to satisfy the wants of the nation, when the great association has announced that it is impossible for them to accomplish the feat? Their object cannot be to obtain popularity in the country. I believe myself that, on the whole, there is no subject so unpopular in England at present as parliamentary reform. Is it to obtain popularity in this House? I will say nothing of my friends around me,



who, I think, during the campaign of reform last year, behaved with great temper and forbearance, and gave every fair opportunity to the government to carry their bill if they could. But I can say something of the feelings of hon. gentlemen opposite, because month after month I watched their countenances, and saw men representing capital cities and large constituencies whose teeth were chattering in their heads when the order of the day was read. Their pallid visages could not be concealed from the commonest observers; you found them in the lobbies shaking in their shoes at the threatening invasion of a £6 constituency. Why, sir, these are traits which convince me that the hon. gentleman and his friends will obtain no popularity among their co-mates and colleagues in this House by the course they propose to pursue. Well, then, what can be their motive? Is it the honourable object of proving that, though they are taking an unpopular course so far as the country is concerned—though they are taking an odious course so far as their intimate friends are concerned—that they are still consistent, they have not changed their minds, and that, though changes may have occurred in other quarters, they are the same as when they presented themselves upon the hustings? If that be the result which they desire, then I say it is one which they can obtain without wasting the time of parliament, and without still further injuring that cause of parliamentary reform to which they are devoted." Mr. Disraeli then concluded by recommending these "independent members" to hold a public meeting to prove to the country that their opinions were unchanged, and suggested that their friends should take the opportunity to present them with a testimonial. He would subscribe.

The motion of Mr. Locke-King was agreed to without a division, and on the second reading of the bill (March 13, 1861) Mr. Disraeli again addressed the House on the subject. Lord John Russell had said, that he fully agreed with the leader of the Opposition

that the representation of the people was a subject which could only be dealt with in a complete and comprehensive manner, but that he thought an exception ought to be made in regard to the county franchise. "Now, why make an exception in regard to the county franchise?" asked Mr. Disraeli. "Is the county franchise that portion of the franchise for which we find the largest number of applicants? Is it in the counties where you find persons most eager to claim the possession of the franchise? Is the county constituency in point of number inferior to the borough constituency? Is it not a notorious fact that the constituency represented by 150 county members of this House is more numerous than the constituency represented by more than 300 borough members? Then I want to know, if the noble lord admits the principle that we ought to deal only in a complete and comprehensive manner with the subject of parliamentary reform, on what grounds can the noble lord justify the exception he is now making? . . . With regard to the bill before us, I object to dealing with this question of the extension of the suffrage but in a complete and comprehensive measure. I deny that we can consider the due and legitimate incidence of the county franchise unless we take into consideration, at the same time, the franchise in the boroughs; and not merely that subject, but unless we take into consideration all which affects the representation of the people in parliament. That would be with me a sufficient reason for not entering into this discussion. But I will not say, as others have said, that if a large measure were brought before us, and this were portion of it, I could approve it. I entirely disapprove of this measure. I state, without equivocation, that this is not in any degree, either in its form or spirit, the measure which we proposed with respect to the county franchise in our bill."

Mr. Disraeli then defended the reform bill which the Conservative party had introduced, and showed how it differed

from the measure now before the House. "The other day," he continued, "we were told that the measure we brought forward with respect to the franchise in counties was identical with that brought forward by the hon. member for East Surrey. It was not so. The primary qualification in our bill certainly arose from a £10 occupation, but it was a £10 occupation of land. Our bill, too, included a county franchise founded on personal property, a lodger franchise, franchises founded on the possession of intelligence, and franchises of other kinds. But the mode by which a *bonâ fide* and virtual representation of the landed interest in all its classes was secured was not confined merely to the invention of franchises. We have been reminded to-night that in that bill there was a provision, that the possessor of a freehold should vote in the locality in which the freehold was placed. At the same time that we agreed that the £10 occupier in unrepresented towns should vote for the county, we also took care that the urban influence should not be overwhelming by regulating that the possessor of a freehold in a town should vote in the locality with which he was legitimately connected. There was no disfranchisement of 40s. freeholders in the bill I brought forward. That charge has been made in this House to-night. A bill which was not allowed to be read a second time is of course liable to misrepresentation. We looked upon the 40s. freehold franchise as one of the soundest, most valuable, and most constitutional in the country; it was the very last we should have dreamt of abolishing. All we proposed was that in a large scheme, consisting of so many franchises, the elector should vote in the locality in which his qualification was situate.

"But is that all? We have heard to-night of the great mischiefs that would occur if the bill of the hon. member for East Surrey were carried, by swamping, as the phrase is, the natural constituency of the counties representing the predominant property and

prime industry of the counties. Did we not provide against that? Did we not secure in our bill the revision of borough boundaries? What would occur under the bill of the hon. member for East Surrey is that Manchester or Birmingham, or fifty other great towns, might overwhelm the natural constituency of a county by a population which really is homogeneous with the civic and urban constituency of Manchester or Birmingham. What provision is there against such a result in the bill of the hon. member for Surrey? None; our revision of the existing borough boundaries met the difficulty. . . . I say all our arrangements for the county franchise were framed with this view—while we increased the garrison of the constitution, while we enlisted in support of the landed interest of the country a great variety of sympathies and influences, we endeavoured to secure for the landed interest that predominance which is necessary to public liberty; and that was the object, and the only object, we had. It was not to secure any petty interest of our own; but we recognized in the due preponderance of the land in the constitutional scheme the best and most efficacious security for local government and public liberty." Upon a division the "previous question," which had been moved by Mr. Augustus Smith, was negatived by 248 to 229; consequently the motion for the second reading could not be put, and the bill miscarried.

If Mr. Locke-King was never tired of bringing forward the subject in which he was interested, neither was Sir John Trelawny; and the question of the abolition of church-rates once more came up for discussion. The advice which Mr. Disraeli had given to his audience at Amersham had been accepted and eagerly acted upon. Throughout the country the cry arose that the abolition of church-rates involved the downfall of the national church. Meetings were held, societies were formed, pamphlets were published, and every effort made to impress upon the people generally that



church-rates and the established church went hand in hand together, and could not be abolished without danger to the religious interests of the country. The result of this agitation was soon apparent when Sir John Trelawny again brought his motion before the House.

The second reading of the bill was strenuously opposed by Mr. Disraeli. If that bill were carried, he said (February 27, 1861), the first effect would be to deprive the parishioners in vestry assembled of the privilege they then possessed of self-taxation. The abolition of church-rates would be an assault upon the independence of the parish and upon the integrity of the church. There were no just grounds of complaint against the tax. When the House came practically to consider the question, it was impossible to say that there was any class which experienced a grievance from the exercise of a law ancient in its character, popular in its principle, and which all must admit was, if not for a general, for a public purpose. He did not forget the dissenter. "We have heard," proceeded Mr. Disraeli, "a great deal of dissenters in this and previous debates on this subject; and one would almost suppose from the manner in which the dissenter was mentioned that he was some stranger in the country or some wild animal. Why, a dissenter is our friend, our neighbour, our tenant, our tradesman; he is an Englishman animated by all the feelings and principles of Englishmen. What is the position of a dissenter with respect to this? If he finds himself in a majority in any parish where a rate is proposed, he has a victorious power of self-defence in that majority, and he can by the votes of himself and friends shield himself from these grievances of which you say that he complains. What is the position of a dissenter in parishes in which he is in the minority? In that case, if he be animated by the same feelings of any other Englishman—and I know by experience he is so—he yields to the opinion of the majority, for such he knows is the

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principle upon which our social system is established. If the majority is overwhelming, he yields without a murmur; if it be slight he can exercise his influence if he chooses, so that next year the majority may change into a minority." No one, maintained Mr. Disraeli, could fairly say that on the ground of grievance the abolition of the law should be urged by dissenters.

Mr. Disraeli then denied that his opposition to the measure was for party purposes. "The Church of England," he said in conclusion, "is not a mere depository of doctrine. The Church of England is a part of England—it is a part of our strength and a part of our liberties, a part of our national character. It is a chief security for that local government which a radical reformer (Mr. Bright) has thought fit to-day to designate as an 'archæological curiosity.' It is a principal barrier against that centralizing supremacy which has been in all other countries so fatal to liberty. And it is because the bill of the hon. baronet is opposed to these great influences—it is because the parishes which now are spoken of with contempt, and the church with feelings of a more vindictive character, are assailed by this bill—that I shall give it my uncompromising opposition."

On a division the second reading of the bill was carried by 281 to 266, being a considerable falling off from the previous majority in its favour. Thus encouraged, the Conservatives and the other defenders of church-rates, both in and out of the House, redoubled their exertions to defeat the measure; and with such success that on the third reading of the bill the Ayes and Noes were exactly equal, there being 274 on each side. The Speaker was consequently called upon to give a casting vote, and amid much cheering from the Opposition he supported the "Noes," stating as his reason that as the numbers were so large on both sides at this stage of the proceedings it was advisable to give

the House an opportunity of reconsidering the question. The bill was thus lost.

During the March of this year the Duchess of Kent, the mother of our gracious queen, passed to her rest. Addresses of condolence from both Houses were presented to the throne on the sad occasion. In the House of Commons the address was moved by Lord Palmerston, and seconded by the leader of the Opposition. "The ties," said Mr. Disraeli (March 18, 1861), "which united Her Majesty to her lamented parent were not only of an intimate, but of a peculiar character. In the history of our reigning House, none were ever placed as this widowed princess and her royal child. Never before devolved on a delicate sex a more august or a more awful responsibility. How those great duties were encountered—how fulfilled—may be read in the conscience of a grateful and a loyal people. Therefore, notwithstanding the serene retirement of her life, the name of the Duchess of Kent will remain in our history from its interesting and benignant connection with an illustrious reign. Sir, for the great grief which has fallen on the queen there is only one source of human consolation—the recollection of unbroken devotedness to the being whom we have loved and whom we have lost. That tranquillizing and sustaining memory is the inheritance of our sovereign. It is generally supposed that the anguish of affection is scarcely compatible with the pomp of power, but that is not so in the present instance. She who reigns over us has elected, amid all the splendour of empire, to establish her life on the principle of domestic love. It is this, it is the remembrance and consciousness of this, which now sincerely saddens the public spirit, permits a nation to bear its heartfelt sympathy to the foot of a bereaved throne, and whisper solace even to a royal heart."

A few weeks after this formal manifestation of a national sorrow, which was really felt, Mr. Gladstone introduced (April 15, 1861) his financial statement. The expenditure he estimated at £70,000,000, and

the income at £71,823,000, that being the largest estimate of revenue ever laid before the country. He proposed to apply the surplus in the reduction of the income tax by 1*d.* per pound—the 10*d.* being reduced to 9*d.*, and the 7*d.* to 6*d.*—and to abolish the duty on paper. The first-mentioned reduction would absorb £850,000, and the latter £665,000. He also proposed to re-enact the tea and sugar duties for one year. Into the various discussions criticising the details of this statement we need not enter. Mr. Disraeli warned the House to proceed with more caution than in respect to the budget of last year. The deficiency of last year, he said, appeared to have been supplied by increasing the liabilities and diminishing the resources of the country, by reducing the balances in the exchequer and adding to the debt. He would not dispute the statement of the chancellor of the exchequer that there was a real surplus, though the mode by which it had been arrived at—the retention and renewal of war duties—was, to say the least, very peculiar. He offered no opposition to the income tax, but he strongly objected to the war tax on sugar, and he saw no occasion for the repeal of the paper duty.

The question as to the repeal of the paper duty was, however, on this occasion the chief bone of contention. Many members were of opinion that if taxes were to be remitted, the tax should be taken off tea in preference to that off paper. Then it was asked, if the paper duty was to be repealed, should the Commons send up another bill for its repeal to the Lords, and thus subject the proposal to another rejection?

After much discussion upon the subject, Mr. Gladstone came down to the House early in May and announced his intention to include all the chief financial propositions of the budget in one bill, instead of dividing it into several bills as had formerly been the practice. This interference with the right of criticism of the peers led to a fierce and acrimonious debate. Mr. Macdonough, an eminent member of the Irish bar, argued



that no instance had ever before occurred in which a measure rejected by the Upper House had been annexed to a bill of supply, and passed by the Lower House in that compound form; that new precedents could not be created; and that such an attempt to annex to a money bill a measure distasteful to the peers was an interference with the rights and privileges of the House of Lords. Lord Robert Cecil characterized the step as designed "to avenge a special political defeat, to gratify a special pique, and to gain the doubtful votes of a special political section." Sir James Graham, though suffering from illness, spoke with his usual vigour on the side of the government proposal. "It is open," he said, "to the Lords to reject the whole; or if they think fit, they may alter a part of it; but according to the well-known principle, altering a portion is equal to the rejection of the whole. I have heard a sort of hustings-cry, 'Down with the paper duty, and up with the tea duty.' Now, I do not wish to raise an invidious hustings-cry; but if we are to have a hustings-cry—if that fatal issue should be joined, 'Up with the Lords, and down with the Commons'—if that issue be taken, I do not think that gentlemen on this side need be afraid of going to their constituents with that cry; and I very much mistake if the power and authority of the House of Commons would not be confirmed by a large majority."

Mr. Disraeli also criticised the course the government intended to pursue. He believed, he said (May 30, 1861), that their action might be justified by precedent; still it was "unwise, unnecessary, and impolitic." Why should the government make a change in the form of their proceedings, the only apparent object of which was to produce a collision and render conciliation impossible? "It is of great importance," he said, "even for the House of Commons, with all its power, to be on terms of good and cordial understanding with the other House of parliament. We live in an age of rapid transition. The character of this House

has been greatly changed within the memory of man, and the power of this House has been greatly increased. The power of the House of Lords, as we are often reminded, has no doubt at the same time been greatly diminished. During the last thirty years or more the Lords have lost a great deal of power. But we should be under a great mistake if we forgot to observe that they have also gained something. The House of Lords, indeed, can no longer exercise that power which the ancient barons exercised, because there was then only one kind of property in this country, and they were almost the sole possessors of it. The House of Lords cannot, indeed, exercise that power which was exercised by the great nobles who invented the constitution of 1688, and established an oligarchy in this country. No doubt all that is changed; but the House of Lords still possess a great and growing influence in the conviction of the national mind, that an intermediate body between the popular branch of the legislature and absolute legislation is a great security for public liberty and for temperate government. The people of England feel that the existence of a body of that kind is a great blessing; and all the public experience of Europe has assured them that that is a body which cannot be artificially created. They therefore consider it a very fortunate circumstance for this country that such an intermediate body should have risen, supported by property, by tradition, and by experience, ready to act with the critical faculty which is necessary when precipitate legislation is threatened, and at least to obtain time, so that upon all questions of paramount importance the ultimate decision should be founded on the mature opinion of an enlightened nation. Now, this is the great influence which the House of Lords possess, and it is a growing influence. I would further say, that if the House of Lords continue to be guided by the wise and temperate feelings which have animated them of late years, that is an influence that

I believe will increase, and will always be exercised for the public advantage; and I think that our discussions on our relations with the House of Lords, in reference to this very question of our financial policy, have assisted this House and assisted the country to arrive at sounder opinions upon the subject." Was it therefore wise or politic, he inquired, to irritate so useful an intermediate body? Was it time wasted to discuss questions which involved considerations of so delicate and important a character?

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to argue that in the remission of taxation war taxes should have the preference over all other taxes—a precedence which was a sound and popular doctrine. He would have had no objection had the whole of the surplus been devoted to the reduction of the income tax, since "it ought to be borne in mind that there is no tax the remission of which so greatly stimulates consumption." But undoubtedly the duty on tea should be reduced in preference to abolishing the excise on paper. He did not consider that the excise on paper was a greater disadvantage than an excise duty would be to any

other manufacture. He concluded by opposing the fiscal policy of the government, and maintained that in the remission of taxation the taxes on tea and sugar should first be removed before the paper duty was touched. By such a course ministers would maintain their faith with the great body of the people, and avoid offending the other branch of the legislature. The House divided, and the steps taken by the government in the matter were approved of by a majority of fifteen. Mr. Disraeli did not continue the contest, and the peers, finding resistance useless, eventually submitted.\*

With the passing of the budget and the consequent repeal of the paper duty, the labours of the session came to an end. Parliament was prorogued August 6, 1861, and members went down into the country, glad to escape from duties which had been somewhat dull and wearisome. The Opposition had during the past session declined to put forth all its strength, or to avail itself of those tactics which, in the then divided state of the Liberal party, could, if not have overthrown the Palmerston cabinet, at least have gravely interfered with the course of legislation. The

\* During the reign of Henry IV. it was decreed that it was the exclusive right of the House of Commons to grant supplies and to impose and appropriate all charges upon the people. The House of Lords has no power whatever to change or alter money bills—its functions are reduced to a simple assent or negative. As a co-ordinate branch of the legislature, the Lords can withhold their assent from any bill; and in former times their power of rejecting a money bill was expressly acknowledged by the Commons, but as for centuries they had forborne to exercise this power, it is now not admitted. "The occasion," writes Mr. Sheldon Amos, "on which the House of Lords might seem to have been weakened as an independent portion of the legislature was the repeal of the paper duties in 1861. When the House of Lords decided to retain a tax which the House of Commons had decided to have repealed, it joined issue, probably for the last time, on a question which hitherto had been less a matter of severe constitutional usage than of mutual courtesy between the Houses, and of almost undisputed custom. It was imputed to the House of Lords that it thereby in effect initiated a money bill, counter to the fixed popular notion and habitual practice that all propositions for taxing the people should first be addressed to the popular representatives in the Commons by the ministers of the crown, the functions of the Upper House being limited to the simple acceptance or rejection of the proposed tax. When Mr. Gladstone, on May 6, 1861, announced that he intended to include all the chief financial propositions of the budget in one bill, he 'virtually placed the Lords,' as the Rev. W. M. Molesworth says in his *History*, 'in the position of being obliged to accept or reject the whole financial scheme; and, in fact, deprived them not only of the power that they had

exercised in the case of the paper duties, but of that power of examination and amendment of details which they had hitherto enjoyed without question or dispute.' The House divided on Mr. Gladstone's proposition, and his bill was carried by a narrow majority of fifteen. The dispute between the Houses was not carried any further. The victory was won in much the same way as the well-known constitutional victories of earlier times had been won by the two Houses as against the king. As in the older time the king could not obtain a supply without at least promising a redress of grievances—the acknowledgment of the grievances and the validity of the grant being henceforth bound up in one invisible whole—so, by the mere form of the reference from the one House to the other, the Lords were rendered incapable of dissenting from the repeal of the paper duties without rendering themselves responsible for a standstill of government, consequent upon their refusal to grant the crown the revenues necessary for carrying it on. This device, by which the pressure of one part of the legislature is brought to bear on the other, is obvious enough of its kind, but must be kept for use only on the rarest emergencies, at the risk of a deadlock occurring, and strong personal feelings concurring with the real demands of utility to relieve the situation in some other way than by the lasting subordination of that part on which pressure is brought to bear. A similar sort of pressure through the medium of money bills was brought to bear in France in 1877, when the president of the republic persistently refused to co-operate, according to the recognized constitutional forms, with the other departments of the legislature; and the same device is notoriously used with great frequency—not to say abuse—in the English colonies having parliamentary institutions."



Conservative party was, however, superior to the ignoble machinations of a factious Opposition, and had before them but one object in view—the good of the country. At a banquet given to the late ministers at the Mansion House, Lord Derby (and his words were re-echoed by Mr. Disraeli) explained the reason which had induced his followers to support the present cabinet in office, rather than involve the country in a new series of embarrassments, arising from the divided state of political parties. “We are firmly convinced,” said Lord Derby, “that whatever our personal advantages might be, it is for the advantage of the country that there should not be constant changes of government. We desire to see a strong government, I fear we have not one at present, and I must confess honestly that I do not see the mode of forming a strong government; but that which is most to the prejudice of the country is a succession of weak governments and a perpetual change, creating both inconvenience and embarrassment—embarrassment to the sovereign, embarrassment and inconvenience in all our foreign and diplomatic arrangements, embarrassment and want of steadiness in carrying out our internal policy.”

During the autumn the nation was chiefly occupied in watching the course of events across the Atlantic. In the unhappy civil war that was then being waged English sympathy was almost exclusively engaged on the side of the Southerners. In spite of the South supporting the cause of slavery, it was remembered that the Southerners had a high regard for the mother country, and piqued themselves upon the good English blood that flowed in their veins, whilst many of the planters in their frequent visits to London had made themselves very popular among the higher classes of society. The people of the North, on the contrary, had of late years frequently crossed the path of England, and, by their arrogant tone and domineering diplomacy, had alienated many of those Englishmen who would willingly

have forgotten, for the sake of his better qualities, the offensive braggadocio, the low cunning, the egotistic and vindictive piety, and the social servility ill-masked by an aggressive independence, which so often constitute the chief elements in the character of the American north of the Potomac. The victories of the South were hailed with delight; and as state after state seceded from the Union, the news was received throughout the country with the warmest expressions of approval.

This sympathy was rendered all the stronger when the intelligence arrived of the *Trent* affair. Captain Wilkes, a bullying and impetuous naval officer, who then commanded the United States frigate the *San Jacinto*, having been informed that Messrs. Mason and Sliddell, two Southern gentlemen, were proceeding from Havannah to Europe, by the British mail steamer the *Trent*, as commissioners of the Confederate government, signalled the vessel and fired some shots across her bows. Thus compelled to stop, the *Trent* was boarded by some armed sailors from the American frigate, who demanded the persons of Messrs. Mason and Sliddell. The British captain refusing to accede to this request the Americans seized the two Southern passengers, took them forcibly from the *Trent*, and carried them away on board the frigate to Boston. The indignation that this high-handed act excited in England, and the strange enthusiasm it created among the unthinking masses in the United States, nearly led to a speedy rupture of the peace that had hitherto existed between the two countries. The highest legal authorities were consulted, and after a brief examination of the case, gave it as their distinct opinion that the action of Captain Wilkes was illegal. And now, throughout the length and breadth of England, there was but one loud cry for war and vengeance against those who had dared to insult the British flag. Lord Lyons, our minister at Washington, was instructed to quit America

within seven days unless the government of the United States consented to the unconditional liberation of Messrs. Mason and Sliddell. This message was supported by France, Austria, and Prussia, who thus showed the North that England was not isolated in the matter. The American government, not wishing to have two wars on their hands, prudently yielded to the demands of Lord Lyons; and the two Southern gentlemen, who had been the innocent cause of all this bellicose irritation, were released and put on board an English ship, and permitted to continue their voyage without any further interruption. The episode did not, however, tend to increase our sympathy for the North.

Whilst the country was under the influence of this irritation, Mr. Disraeli came forward at the annual meeting of the Oxford diocesan church societies, held at Aylesbury November 14, 1861, under the presidency of the bishop of Oxford, and explained the causes which had of late years led to an irritation of another kind. His subject was the Church of England, and he spoke at an opportune moment. The church then as now was torn by conflicting sections—the one seeking to undermine faith by the glamour of superstition, the other undermining faith by the power of intellect. Ritualism and Rationalism were the opposing forces, and between the two the position of the Church of England was in great jeopardy. In the opinion of Mr. Disraeli the Anglican church—with popish mummeries on one side, and open infidelity on the other, whilst Dissent was quick to seize upon any advantage which a breach in the church might offer—was only able to make an effectual stand against the arts of the invaders and of the traitors within the citadel, by presenting a firm and united resistance to the foe. Unhappily he saw the church disunited, and this want of union he attributed to three feelings, which in different degrees influenced different sections of churchmen. These feelings he described as

a feeling of perplexity, a feeling of distrust, and a feeling of discontent.

“The feeling of perplexity, I am told,” he said, “arises from what is usually styled the state of parties in the church, which, from their apparently opposite courses, distract and enfeeble the efforts of churchmen. This feeling appears to me to be entirely without foundation. Parties have always existed in the Church of England. Nay, more, there never has been a Christian church, even those which have most affected the character of unity, in which parties have not equally prevailed. But there is this peculiarity in the Church of England, that parties within its pale have been always permitted, nay, recognized and sanctioned. Our church, always catholic and expansive in its character, has ever felt that the human mind was a manifold quality, and that some men must be governed by enthusiasm, and some controlled by ceremony. Happy the land where there is an institution which prevents enthusiasm from degenerating into extravagance, and ceremony from being degraded into superstition! No doubt, during the last thirty years there have been periods of excess on both sides. But in such great matters we cannot draw a general conclusion from so limited an observation, and the aggregate of experience, in my opinion, fully justifies the conviction that parties in the church are not a sign of its weakness, but rather a symbol of its strength.

“I come now to the feeling of distrust among churchmen. That, I hesitate not to say, is mainly attributable to the speculations on sacred things which have been recently published by certain clergymen of our church.\* I deeply regret that publication—for the sake of the writers, for no other reason. I am myself in favour of free inquiry on all subjects, civil and religious, with no condition but that it be pursued with learning, argument, and conscience. But then I think we have a right to expect that free inquiry should be pursued by free inquirers. And in my opinion,

\* “*Essays and Reviews*” were published Feb., 1860.



the authors of 'Essays and Reviews' have entered into engagements with the people of this country quite inconsistent with the views advanced in those prolusions. The evil is not so much that they have created a distrust in things; that might be removed by superior argument and superior learning. The evil is, that they have created a distrust in persons, and that is a sentiment which once engendered is not easily removed, even by reason and erudition. Setting, however, aside the characters of the writers, I am not disposed to evade the question whether the work itself is one which should justify distrust among churchmen. Perhaps it may not be altogether unsuitable that a layman should make a remark upon this subject, and that the brunt of comment should not always be borne by clergymen. Now, the volume of 'Essays and Reviews,' generally speaking, is founded on the philosophical theology of Germany. What is German theology? It is of the greatest importance that clearer ideas should exist upon this subject than I find generally prevail in most assemblies of my countrymen.

"About a century ago, German theology, which was mystical, became by the law of reactions critical. There gradually arose a school of philosophical theologians, which introduced a new system for the interpretation of scripture. Accepting the sacred narrative without cavil, they explained all the supernatural incidents by natural causes. This system in time was called Rationalism, and, supported by great learning and even greater ingenuity, in the course of half a century absorbed the opinion of all the intellect of Germany, and indeed greatly influenced that of every protestant community. But where now is German rationalism, and where are its results? They are erased from the intellectual tablets of living opinion. A new school of German theology then arose, which, with profound learning and inexorable logic, proved that Rationalism was irrational, and successfully substituted for it a new scheme of scriptural interpretation called the mythical. But,

if the mythical theologians triumphantly demonstrated, as they undoubtedly did, that Rationalism was irrational, so the mythical system itself has already become a myth; and its most distinguished votaries, in that spirit of progress which, as we are told, is the characteristic of the nineteenth century, and which generally brings us back to old ideas, have now found an invincible solution of the mysteries of existence in a revival of pagan pantheism.

"That, I believe, is a literally accurate sketch of the various phases through which the intellect of Germany has passed during the last century. Well, I ask, what has the church to fear from speculations so overreaching, so capricious, and so self-destructive? And why is society to be agitated by a volume which is at the best a second-hand medley of these contradictory and discordant theories? No religious creed was ever destroyed by a philosophical theory; philosophers destroy themselves. Epicurus was as great a man, I apprehend, as Hegel; but it was not Epicurus who subverted the religion of Olympus. But, it may be said, are not such lucubrations to be noticed and answered? Both, I reply. Yet, I may observe in passing, that those who answer them should remember that hasty replies always assist well-matured attacks. Let them be answered, then, by men equal to the occasion, and I doubt not that many such will come forward. That a book of that character, written by clergymen of the Church of England, should pass unnoticed by authority, would have been most inconsistent. The conduct of Convocation in this matter appeared to me to be marked by all that discretion and sound judgment which have distinguished its proceedings ever since its revival, and which are gradually, but surely, obtaining for it public confidence. It denounced what it deemed pestilent heresies, but it did not counsel the prosecution of the heretics. And here I am bound to say that I wish this frank and reasonable course had been followed in

high places. The wisest of men has said, 'For everything there is a season;' and the nineteenth century appears to me a season when the church should confute error, and not punish it.\*

"Having touched upon the causes of perplexity and distrust, I will now say a word upon the third cause of the want of union among churchmen—the feeling of discontent. That is a feeling which prevails among a certain body of our brethren, who entertain what are deemed by some exalted notions respecting ecclesiastical affairs. I know that recent appointments to high places in the church,† and other public circumstances, in their opinion equally opposed to the spread and spirit of sound church principles, have made some look without any enthusiasm on the connection between church and state, and even contemplate without alarm the possible disruption of that union. It is impossible to speak of those who hold these opinions without respect, and I would say even affection, for we all of us to a great degree must share in the sentiments of those who entertain these opinions, though we may not be able to sanction their practical conclusions. But I think myself that these opinions rest on a fallacy; and that fallacy consists in assuming that if the dissolution of the tie between church and state took place, the church would occupy that somewhat mediæval position which, no doubt, in its time was highly advantageous to Europe, and to no country more than to England. My own opinion

differs from theirs. I do not believe that in this age or in this country the civil power would ever submit to a superior authority, or even brook a rival. I foresee, if that were to take place, controversy and contest between church and state as to their reciprocal rights and duties; possible struggle, probable spoliation. I for one am not prepared to run such hazards. I should grieve to see this great Church of England, this centre of light, learning, and liberty, sink into a position, relative to the nation, similar to that now filled by the Episcopal Church of Scotland, or possibly even subside into a fastidious, not to say finical, congregation.

"I hold that the connection between church and state is one which is to be upheld and vindicated on principles entirely in unison with the spirit of the age, with the circumstances with which we have to deal, and with the soundest principles of political philosophy. The most powerful principle which governs man is the religious principle. It is eternal and indestructible, for it takes its rise in the nature of human intelligence, which will never be content till it penetrates the origin of things and ascertains its relations to the Creator—a knowledge to which all who are here present well know that, unaided and alone, human intelligence can never attain. A wise government, then, would seek to include such an element in its means of influencing man; otherwise it would leave in society a principle stronger than itself, which in due season may assert its supremacy, and even perhaps in a destructive manner. A wise government, allying itself with religion, would, as it were, consecrate society and sanctify the state. But how is this to be done? It is the problem of modern politics which has always most embarrassed statesmen. No solution of the difficulty can be found in salaried priesthoods and in complicated concordats. But by the side of the state of England there has gradually arisen a majestic corporation—wealthy, powerful, independent—with

\* In the Lower House of Convocation, Dr Jelf (Feb. 26, 1861) brought up the question of "Essays and Reviews" by moving an address to the Upper House, asking it to take synodical action upon a book full of erroneous views, and applied by atheists and Socinians to further their ends. After some discussion, the motion was withdrawn in favour of an amendment by Dr. Wordsworth, the present bishop of Lincoln: "That the clergy of the Lower House of Convocation of the province of Canterbury, having regard to the numerous errors which have been already pronounced and published by the archbishops and bishops of both provinces on certain opinions contained in a certain book called 'Essays and Reviews,' entertain an earnest hope that, under the able leadership, the faithful zeal of the Christian church may be enabled to counteract the pernicious influence of the errors and opinions contained in the said volume."

† An allusion to the appointment of Canon Stanley to the see of Westminster.





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